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London - County Council - Lack of Employment in London - 1903.

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London County Council.

LACK OF EMPLOYMENT IN LONDON.

MINUTES of the Proceedings at a Conference, on 13th February and 3rd April, 1903, between representatives of the London County Council and of the administrative authorities in London, on the subject of the Lack of Employment in London; together with a report of the General Purposes Committee of the London County Council, presented to, and adopted by, the Council on 27th October, 1903, with regard to the recommendations made by the Conference.

(Ordered by the London County Council, to be printed.)

COUNTY HALL,
SPRING-GARDENS, S.W.,
November, 1903.

G. L. GOMME,
Clerk of the Council.

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London County Council.

LACK OF EMPLOYMENT IN LONDON.

In accordance with a resolution passed by the London County Council on 16th December, 1902, all the administrative authorities in London were invited to appoint representatives to attend a Conference "to consider the present lack of employment, and to make representations thereon to the Secretary of State for the Home Department and the President of the Local Government Board; and if necessary, to call a further Conference of all public bodies throughout the United Kingdom with a view of approaching His Majesty's Government and urging upon them the necessity of a national scheme for dealing with the problem."

The first meeting of the Conference took place at the County Hall, Spring-gardens, on 13th February, 1903. Sir John McDougall, then chairman of the Council, presided, and Lord Monkswell, vice-chairman, Mr. Henry Clarke, deputy-chairman, and 26 members of the Council were present, as were also representatives of the City Corporation, of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, of the several Metropolitan Borough Councils, and, with one exception, of the respective Boards of Guardians for London.

At this meeting several suggestions, which had been previously made by the Poplar Metropolitan Borough Council and by the respective Boards of Guardians of Poplar, Camberwell, Stepney and Hackney, were discussed, and ultimately referred to a Committee consisting of 15 members.

This Committee chose as their chairman Mr. John Burns, and as their vice-chairman the Rev. Canon C. E. Escreet. They presented their report at a second meeting of the Conference, held at the County Hall, on 8th April, 1903, at which Lord Monkswell, the Chairman of the Council, presided. Mr. E. A. Cornwall, vice-chairman, and Mr. R. A. Robinson, deputy-chairman, and 15 members of the Council attended, as did also representatives of the City Corporation, of 17 of the Metropolitan Borough Councils, and of 14 Boards of Guardians.

This report, which is voluminous and relates to several matters bearing upon the subject of the reference to the Committee, contains several recommendations which were adopted by the Conference and submitted to the Council. The report and recommendations have been carefully considered by the General Purposes Committee of the Council, whose report thereon was presented to, and approved by, the Council on 27th October, 1903.

The resolutions passed by the Council, as the result of consideration of the report of its General Purposes Committee on the recommendations submitted by the Conference, are as follows—

Relief works.

(a) That it be referred to the General Purposes Committee to consider and report upon the question of preparing schemes of public works, which may usefully be carried out in the county during periods of distress, and as to the probable cost of such schemes, and their bearing upon the requirements of the county.

Training of surplus town population in needs and ways of country life. Migration and Emigration.

(b) That it be referred to the Technical Education Board to consider and make a special report (1) as to the steps which may usefully be taken for providing practical training in agricultural pursuits for workers at present in London, and (2) as to the desirability of providing lectures on the colonies, for the benefit of those of the poorer classes who may wish to know of the advantages and conditions of colonisation.

Employment of women.

(c) That it be referred to the Public Health Committee to consider and report as to the registration and periodical inspection of the places of employment of outworkers.

Employment of children.

(d) That the resolution passed by the Conference on the subject of the employment of children be referred to the Public Control Committee.*

Establishment of a more complete industrial organisation throughout the country.

(e) That it be an instruction to the General Purposes Committee to consider, and, if necessary, to communicate with the Prime Minister (i.) on the question of constituting the conditions of unemployed workers a subject of local administration, and (ii.) as to the establishment of an industrial organisation throughout the country on the lines of the suggestion made in the report of the committee appointed by the Conference.

Economical difficulties of the poor.

(f) That it be referred to the General Purposes Committee to consider and report as to the advisability of appointing a special committee to inquire into and report upon the economical difficulties of the poor.

* NOTE.—The resolution of the conference is as follows—That the conference do record its opinion that legislation with the object of preventing the employment of children below the age of 12 years is eminently desirable, and that the County Council be asked to forward the finding of the conference on this subject to the Home Secretary.

National Conference.

(g) That copies of the report of the Conference be forwarded to the county, municipal, and poor law, authorities throughout the country, and that the observations of those authorities be invited thereon.

Relief works by Metropolitan Borough Councils.

(h) That the General Purposes Committee be authorised to communicate with the Metropolitan Borough Councils on the lines of the resolution of the Conference as to the preparation of schemes of public works of a local character.†

Period of execution of public works.

(i) That it be suggested to the various public authorities in London that, as far as practicable, public work be carried out during the "slack" seasons.

Expediting public works.

(j) That the attention of the various public authorities be invited to the paragraph in the report of the committee to the Conference on the subject of expediting public works.‡

Question of conferring power upon Boards of Guardians to take land for the purpose of providing work in times of want. Co-operation between Borough Councils and Guardians in times of exceptional distress.

(k) That the Metropolitan Borough Councils and Boards of Guardians be invited to express their views on the suggestions (i.) that power should be conferred upon Boards of Guardians, either individually or conjointly, to take land for the purpose of finding work for the unemployed in times of want, and (ii.) that during periods of exceptional distress the Borough Councils should co-operate with the Boards of Guardians in order that the pauperisation of those persons whose difficulties are occasioned only by exceptional circumstances arising from temporary scarcity of employment, may as far as practicable be avoided.

Relief works by the Government.

(l) That a communication be addressed to the Prime Minister suggesting that consideration should be given to the question of the preparation of schemes of works of a national character which may usefully be carried out during periods of distress.

Official labour returns.

(m) That a communication be addressed to the Board of Trade suggesting that steps should be taken for making the official labour returns more generally known throughout the country.

Disfranchisement following poor law relief.

(n) That the Local Government Board be informed of the resolution passed by the Conference on the subject of disfranchisement following the receipt of poor law relief.§

Minister of Industry.

(o) That, in forwarding copies of the report of the Conference to the Prime Minister, attention be invited to the various matters included therein which bear on the question of the promised inquiry into the duties of the Board of Trade and other Government departments.

Militia training.

(p) That the War Office be asked to consider the practicability of altering the periods of the year during which the militia are embodied for training.

Period of execution of public works.

(q) That the attention of the various municipal authorities throughout the country be invited to the question of the desirability of public works being executed during the slack season.

† NOTE—The resolution of the conference is as follows—That the County Council be recommended to invite the borough councils to prepare schemes of public works of a local character which may usefully be carried out during periods of distress.

‡ The paragraph referred to is as follows—The following resolution was suggested by the Poplar Board of Guardians—"That, in view of the exceptional slackness of demand for labour, public authorities are urged to push on with all expedition work for which provision has already been made, more particularly work like the building of houses, which will employ different classes of skilled labour, and that they be recommended to do this with as little publicity as possible, so as not to attract numbers of the unemployed from the country; and, further, that they be recommended to limit employment on these works to local men so far as is possible." This is a matter to which the attention of the various authorities may be invited, and probably many have already taken action in the direction suggested. It may be mentioned, as an illustration, that although no report was purposely made on the matter, at the commencement of the present winter the Chairman of the London County Council arranged that wherever possible works which were required in connection with the Council's operations should be pushed forward, and various works in connection with the main drainage, parks, fire-stations, etc., have been expedited in this way. We recommend—That the County Council be asked to invite the attention of the local authorities to this paragraph.

§ The resolution of the Conference is as follows—That the Conference do endorse the recommendation of the Select Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, that a person should not be disfranchised unless he has received relief for a period exceeding one month during the qualifying year, and has also received relief at some period during the year immediately preceding the qualifying year; and that the County Council be asked to convey to the Local Government Board an expression of the opinion of the Conference on the matter.

Circulation of the report of the Conference.

(r) (i.) That the clerk of the Council do prepare a report embodying a record of the proceedings of the Conference on the subject of the lack of employment, and of the action taken by the Council thereon.

(ii.) That copies of such report be forwarded to—

- (a) The various Government departments.
- (b) The administrative authorities in London.
- (c) The public libraries in London.
- (d) The associations of employers and workmen in London.
- (e) The press.

(iii.) That the administrative authorities in London and the associations of workmen and employers be invited to make observations on the report before mentioned; that such observations when received do stand referred to the General Purposes Committee with an instruction to report to the Council thereon.

(iv.) That the report to be prepared by the clerk of the Council in accordance with resolution (r) (i.) be published and placed on sale.

The minutes of the proceedings at the meetings of the Conference, containing the report of the Conference Committee and the appendices thereto, together with the report, above referred to, of the General Purposes Committee, are appended.

Appendix I. to the report of the Conference Committee shows the ratio, per 1,000 inhabitants, of paupers in receipt of relief in London on the last day of each month during the years 1893 to 1902. The figures for the first eight months of the year 1903 are as follows—

January	25.0	May	23.0
February	25.3	June	22.8
March	24.7	July	22.6
April	23.7	August	22.8

Mean for the eight months, 23.7.

Appendix II. shows the total number of paupers in London in receipt of relief on the last day of each month of the years 1893, 1901 and 1902. The figures for the first eight months of 1903 are as follows—

January	114,646	May	105,277
February	115,641	June	104,210
March	113,082	July	104,243
April	108,685	August	105,251

Appendix III. shows the percentage proportion of members of trade unions unemployed in each month in each year from 1893 to 1902, and in January and February, 1903. The figures for the seven months March to September are as follows—

March	4.3	July	4.9
April	4.1	August	5.5
May	4.0	September	5.8
June	4.5		

Appendix IV. shows the state of employment in London in the trades of (a) carpenters and joiners, (b) plumbers, and (c) shipbuilding.

The following are the figures for September, 1903, the latest published by the Board of Trade—

Trade.	Number of members of unions at end of September, 1903.	Percentage returned as unemployed at end of			Increase (+) or decrease (—) in percentage for 1903 as compared with a	
		Sept., 1903.	Aug., 1903.	Sept., 1902	Month ago	Year ago
Carpenters and joiners	7,324	4.6	3.1	4.5	+ 1.5	+ 0.1
Plumbers	1,185	6.4	5.3	6.3	+ 1.1	+ 0.1
Shipbuilding (Thames and Medway)	4,329	7.6	6.1	11.4	+ 1.5	— 3.8

Appendix V. shows the state of employment of dockers and riverside labourers in London during the nine weeks ended 28th February, 1903. The following table gives the average number employed during the four weeks ended September 26th, 1903—

Period.	Labourers employed in docks.			Labourers employed at 115 wharves making returns.	Total dock and wharf labourers included in returns.
	By dock companies or through contractors.	By shipowners, etc.	Total.		
Week ended September 5th	5,104	2,549	7,653	5,742	13,395
" " 12th	5,736	1,993	7,729	6,144	13,873
" " 19th	6,197	1,415	7,612	5,844	13,456
" " 26th	6,112	2,190	8,302	6,149	14,451
Average for four weeks ended Sept. 26...	5,787	2,037	7,824	5,970	13,794
Average for August, 1903	6,123	2,180	8,303	5,840	13,643
Average for September, 1902	6,736	1,986	8,722	5,818	14,540

The average number employed in September during the six years 1897—1902 was 15,449.

Appendix VI. shows the expenditure incurred by 100 principal trade unions in paying their members unemployed benefit during the ten years 1892 to 1901.

The figures in the appendix are incorrect as regards three of the groups of trade unions, and the totals in the last column are therefore also incorrect. The correct figures are as follows—

Year.	Metal, engineering, and shipbuilding.	Textile.	Other unions.	Total—100 principal unions.
	£	£	£	£
1892	190,070	44,623	42,122	324,874
1893	251,461	47,200	47,281	457,858
1894	260,619	42,227	56,470	447,246
1895	192,305	49,111	47,330	415,543
1896	113,032	34,747	40,128	261,393
1897	194,610	40,638	38,043	327,736
1898	107,610	34,238	41,380	239,112
1899	81,512	26,909	39,994	187,335
1900	93,822	60,030	50,783	260,659
1901	134,743	44,114	55,855	324,868

The expenditure of the 100 trade unions during 1902 under this head is shown below—

Building.	Mining and Quarrying.	Metal, engineering, and shipbuilding.	Textile.	Clothing.	Transport.	Others (various).	Total—100 principal unions.
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
73,804	19,470	204,725	55,521	1,357	3,385	62,649	420,911

Appendix VII. shows the expenditure (total and per head of membership), by 100 principal trade unions, for unemployed benefit; the average percentage of unemployed; and total imports and exports, for each of the years 1892 to 1901.

The figures in the appendix showing the total amount paid by 100 trade unions, and the amount per member, are incorrect. The following are the correct figures—

Year.	Amount of unemployed benefit paid by 100 principal unions.	
	Total.	Per member.
	£	s. d.
1892	324,874	7 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
1893	457,858	10 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
1894	447,246	9 8 $\frac{3}{4}$
1895	415,543	9 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
1896	261,393	5 5 $\frac{1}{2}$
1897	327,736	6 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
1898	239,112	4 7 $\frac{1}{4}$
1899	187,335	3 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
1900	260,659	4 6
1901	324,868	5 6 $\frac{3}{4}$

The following are the figures for 1902—

Amount of unemployed benefit paid by 100 principal unions.		Proportion of unemployed members.	Total imports and exports, including re-exports.
Total.	Per member.*		
£	s. d.		Millions of £.
420,911	7 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	4.4 per cent.	878

* Based on the total membership of the 100 unions.

Appendix VIII. relates to the establishment of labour bureaux by the Metropolitan Borough Councils; and the following is the latest information obtained beyond that contained in the Appendix—

Bermondsey (10th October, 1903)—Labour bureau established in January, 1903, and discontinued in the following May. During that time 2,575 persons registered their names; but no employer of labour, other than the borough council, engaged men through the register.

Bethnal-green (9th October, 1903)—Through the labour bureau established in November, 1902, the borough council engaged a considerable number of persons for short periods. Early in the year 1903 the percentage of persons accepting offered work decreased, and the operation of the borough council was stayed. Not a single inquiry was made by an employer for the supply of any person's services in any trade or work.

Finsbury (8th October, 1903)—During the seven months the labour bureau has been in operation, 1,547 persons applied for employment, private employers offered 113 situations and engaged 125 persons, and the borough council engaged 14.

Fulham (10th October, 1903)—Since 9th February, 1903, when the labour bureau was opened, 1,760 applicants for employment have been registered, and employment has been found for 464; 184 employers in want of workers have called at the bureau, the utility of which appears to be becoming recognised by employers.

Hackney (12th October, 1903)—Unemployed who seek work under the borough council are registered, and the borough council would be prepared at any moment, if necessity arose, to reopen the labour bureau.

Hammersmith (9th October, 1903)—Since labour bureau opened on 5th January, 1903, 721 persons have applied for employment, and for 139 of these it has been found.

Hampstead (10th October, 1903)—Question of establishing a labour bureau has been dropped for the present, as replies from employers were not encouraging.

Holborn (9th October, 1903)—Borough council authorised the establishment of a labour bureau, but applications for employment were so few that the bureau has not been found necessary. It will be put in operation if necessity arises.

Kensington (15th October, 1903)—Borough council decided on 15th October to establish a labour bureau as from 2nd November. Estimated expenditure for the purpose, during the current financial year to 31st March next, £100.

Lambeth (13th October, 1903)—Borough council established a labour bureau in January, 1903, and 500 persons seeking employment were registered, but, no employment being obtained for any of them, the list was closed.

Poplar (9th October, 1903)—Borough council opened last winter a register of unemployed workmen, and the names of 4,460 persons were recorded. Employment was given by the borough council, for three days a week each, to 2,457 persons. There was no instance of the register being inspected by other employers of labour in the borough.

St. Pancras (8th October, 1903)—Borough council labour bureau was reopened in December, 1902, and a large number of men have registered their names and requirements. Employers are gradually appreciating the usefulness of the bureau, and many of the large firms within the borough, and some outside, apply to the bureau when they require employees. Since May, 1901, the bureau has been the instrument of obtaining employment for 313 persons. The cost of the bureau is, approximately, £200 a year.

Shoreditch (10th October, 1903)—Labour bureau opened on 11th February, 1903, and discontinued on 17th April following. During this period 898 persons were registered, and of these 150 were marked as "gone away," "not known," or "found work," etc. Expenses of bureau, £65.

Southwark (19th October, 1903)—Labour bureau opened in January, 1903. About 3,100 persons have been registered, and employment found for 88.

Westminster (12th October, 1903)—Labour bureau established by the City Council on 29th January, 1903, and, up to 30th September, 2,181 persons were registered. Employers applied for 820 employees, and 525 were notified as having been engaged. The experiment has been tried, and proved fairly successful, of placing unskilled labourers with farmers in the country. The bureau is used by large business and private houses, and is considered beneficial and useful in its results. 1,652 persons on the register on 30th September.

Woolwich (8th October, 1903)—Borough Council opened register, at beginning of 1903, of unemployed. Conference of local representatives, convened on 26th May by the borough council, is still sitting.

County Hall,
Spring-gardens, S.W.,
November, 1903.

G. L. GOMME,
Clerk of the Council.

CONFERENCE ON LACK OF EMPLOYMENT.

MINUTES of the Proceedings at the first meeting of the Conference of Representatives of Administrative Authorities in London, held in the County Hall at Spring Gardens, on **Friday**, the **13th** day of **February**, **1903**, on the subject of the Lack of Employment in London.

PRESENT—

The following representatives of the London County Council—

SIR JOHN MCDUGALL, Chairman of the Council, in the Chair.

LORD MONKSWELL, Vice-Chairman of the Council.

Mr. HENRY CLARKE, Deputy-Chairman of the Council.

Mr. R. A. ROBINSON, Vice-Chairman of the General Purposes Committee.

ALLEN, A. A.	DODSON, G. E.	SQUIRES, W. J.
BEACHCROFT, R. M.	GRANVILLE-SMITH, R. W.	STEADMAN, W. C.
BURNS, JOHN	HARRIS, H. P.	STRAUS, B. S.
COLLINS, SIR W. J.	LAMPARD, G.	WEBB, SIDNEY
CORNWALL, E. A.	MACDONALD, J. R.	WELBY, LORD
COUSINS, J. RATCLIFFE	PIGGOTT, JOHN	WHITE, E.
CROOKS, W.	ROTTON, LIEUT.-COL. A.	WOOD, T. MCKINNON
DAVIES, W.	SHEFFIELD, LIEUT.-COL. F.	YATES, W. B.
DICKINSON, W. H.		

The following representatives appointed by the City Corporation, Metropolitan Asylums Board, the Metropolitan Borough Councils and the Boards of Guardians—

City Corporation	Taylor, George	Metropolitan	Ecroyd, W. H.
	Tollworthy, James	Asylums Board	White, J. G.

Metropolitan Borough Councils.

Battersea	... Raynor, A. W., J.P. (Mayor)	Lambeth	... Bristow, H. Hawkey, J. F.
	Rogers, J. W.	Lewisham	... Luck, M. S. White, T.
Bethnal-green	... Catherall, A. J.	Paddington	... Evans, C. D.
	Clark, W. H.	Poplar	... Bellsham, Job Main, Alex.
Camberwell	... Baily, Rev. W. Falkner Shrimpton, J.	St. Marylebone	Elgood, G. J. (Mayor).
Chelsea	... Egerton, H. E., J.P. Griffiths, Evan	St. Pancras	... Collins, H. A. Hennessey, D.
Deptford	... Hines, Daniel Wood, W.	Shoreditch	... Hazell, A. J. Winkler, H.
Finsbury	... Chapman, Middleton Penny, John	Southwark	... Bryan, T., M.A., J.P. (Mayor) Chell, E.
Fulham	... Lee, E. J. Sergeant, W. C.	Stepney	... Barker, W. J. Wherley, E.
Greenwich	... Whibley, G. C.	Stoke Newington	Moore, T. H. G.
Hackney	... Johnson, W. Whiter, J. W.	Wandsworth	... Anderson, Rev. J. H., M.A. Dewey, C. H.
Hammersmith	... Edwards, F. A., F.R.G.S. Rutter, T.	Westminster	... Everitt, W. Walden, R. Woolley
Hampstead	... Hall, C. Payne, E. S.	Woolwich	... Grinling, C. H. Turton, I.
Holborn	... Keen, E. II. White, A. M.		
Islington	... Moffat, C.		
Kensington	... Anderson, J. Pennefather, Rev. Canon S. E.		

Boards of Guardians.

Bethnal-green...	Eickhoff, W. Watts-Ditchfield, Rev. J. E.	Mile - end Old- town	Brien, F. W.
Camberwell ...	Foster, Alfred (Chairman) Masterman, C. F. G.	Paddington ...	Forster, Rev. J. L., D.D.
Chelsea ...	Brass, J. H. Morisson, Rev. W. D.	Poplar ...	Chivers, T. C. Lansbury, G.
City of London	Cross, W. Mann (Chair- man)	St. George's,	Tasker, James
Fulham ...	Goldie, Col. J. Propert, Rev. P. S. G., M.A. (Chairman)	Hanover-square	Wallop, Hon. Gerard
Greenwich ...	Fox-Batley, W.	St. Marylebone	Anglim, J.
Hackney ...	Allardyce, H. L. Saunders, A.	St. Olave's ...	Crawford, Mrs. V. M. Collins, E.
Hammersmith...	Howell, John Neighbour, Wm.	St. Pancras ...	Oakley, W. R. Southan, J.
Hampstead ...	Nunn, Thomas Hancock Viner, Miss Florence A.	Southwark ...	Wetenhall, W. J., J.P. Haynes, Thomas
Islington ...	Farmer, Miss Lizzie Tomkins, Edward	Stepney ...	Horsley, Rev. J. W. Kain, J.
Kensington ...	Edgcombe, F. J. S. (Chairman) Keeling, Miss C.	Strand ...	Lewis, George Jaxone, H. L. D'Arcy Lewin, F. E.
Lambeth ...	Briant, F. Despard, Mrs. C.	Wandsworth and Clapham	Curtis, Rev. H., M.A. Gray, Mrs. Mary
Lewisham ...	Kennard, R.	Westminster ...	Wallis, J. P. Wilton, Rev. G. C.
		Whitechapel ...	Brown, James, J.P. Harris, John, C.C.
		Woolwich ...	Escreet, Rev. Canon Gregory, Alfred

The chairman, in welcoming the representatives from other authorities, stated that the conference had been convened at the instance of the London County Council, who on 16th December, 1902, passed the following resolution—

That the Council do call a conference of all the administrative authorities in London to consider the present lack of employment, and to make representations thereon to the Secretary of State for the Home Department and the President of the Local Government Board; and, if necessary, to call a further conference of all public bodies throughout the United Kingdom with a view of approaching His Majesty's Government and urging upon them the necessity of a national scheme for dealing with the problem.

The chairman mentioned that on the agenda paper which had been circulated all communications received by the Council from the various authorities had been set out, and he stated that he proposed to deal with these matters in the following order, namely—

1. Resolutions suggested by the Poplar Borough Council—

(a) That the County Council be recommended to consider if the immigration of the unemployed into London is sufficiently serious to warrant it in addressing county, borough, district and parish councils warnings regarding the overcrowded state of the labour market in London, and in taking any other steps the Council may deem advisable to make the state of the London labour market as widely known as possible.

(b) That as the recent cold weather showed how near we are to exceptional distress of a very grave kind, the conference declares that in its opinion local authorities, in co-operation with the Government, should consider what steps can be taken to provide work of public utility so as to keep great numbers of the people profitably employed when private industry fails to do so, and with that end in view the conference recommends as follows—

(i.) That the London County Council and the metropolitan boroughs should draw up schedules of improvements and other work which, if immediately undertaken, would be to the public benefit, and classify the work so as to show what part of it should be borne by the localities, by the localities and the County, by the County Council alone, and finally by the Government alone, or in conjunction with all or any one of these municipal authorities.

(ii.) That the Government be urged to take steps immediately to undertake certain extensive work of public benefit to be carried out in convenient sections with a view both to giving workmen permanent employment away from large cities and to aiding them in times of exceptional distress, such works to include afforestation, reclamation of foreshores, and making of a national road round the coast, etc.

(c) That a deputation be appointed to lay the foregoing resolutions before the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the President of the Board of Trade, and the President of the Local Government Board, and to urge the necessity of them appointing a Minister of Industry.

(d) That the County Council be asked to call a national conference of municipal, county and poor law authorities in order to secure these regulations a wider discussion and publicity, and to secure some uniform national policy regarding the treatment of exceptional distress.

2. Resolutions suggested by the Poplar Board of Guardians—

(a) That as it is desirable in time of unusual distress that the temporarily unemployed should be classified apart from the chronically unemployed and the casually employed, borough councils are urged to open a register, in which shall be entered the names, addresses, trade, last employment and its duration, of workmen out of work.

(b) That in view of the exceptional slackness of demand for labour, public authorities are urged to push on with all expedition work for which provision has already been made, more particularly work like the building of houses, which will employ different classes of skilled labour, and that they be recommended to do this with as little publicity as possible, so as not to attract numbers of the unemployed from the country; and, further, that they be recommended to limit employment of these works to local men so far as is possible.

(Here followed resolutions similar to those suggested by the Poplar Borough Council (a) and (b) (i.) and (ii.), set out above.)

The guardians, however, suggested the inclusion of the words "and river improvement, the establishment of agricultural communities," after the word "foreshores," in line 5 of resolution (b) (ii.).

(c) That boards of guardians be urged to adopt a policy by which families who are failing to maintain themselves in towns may, by training in the needs and ways of country life, be drafted back to independence on the land, and the authorities represented at this conference be urged to co-operate with the guardians and other public authorities interested to that end.

(d) That a deputation be appointed to lay the foregoing resolutions before the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the President of the Board of Trade, and the President of the Local Government Board, and to urge the necessity for the appointment of a Minister of Industry.

3. Observations by the Camberwell Board of Guardians—

The Camberwell Board of Guardians expressed the opinion that among the matters which should be considered at the conference were the questions of the equalisation of rates, and modification of the poor laws, so as to enable boards of guardians, either individually or conjointly, to take land for the purpose of finding work for the unemployed in times of want.

4. Observations by the Stepney Board of Guardians—

The guardians stated that they were of opinion that it would be advantageous if a representative standing committee could be appointed, who should be empowered to deal with the unemployed on a sound and definite basis.

The chairman further stated that, since the preparation of the agenda paper, there had been received the following—

5. Resolutions of the Hackney Board of Guardians—

That in the opinion of this board the unrestricted system of alien immigration now permitted is largely responsible for the present congestion of the labour market, and the guardians therefore suggest that the conference convened by the London County Council should urge upon the imperial government the necessity of at once enacting restrictive legislation dealing with this matter.

That the conference convened by the London County Council be requested to consider the advisability of urging the Government to take the following measures, with the view of providing remunerative employment, at a proper rate of wage, for men thrown out of work in the periods of depression of trade, viz.—

(i.) To acquire possession of, and to improve and bring into use, the large tracts of uncultivated or waste land to be found in all parts of the country.

(ii.) To inquire into the question of the coast defences, with a view of having the same properly repaired and maintained, and of reclaiming such submerged areas as may be suitable for this purpose.

The chairman added that he had received the following—

6. Notice of motion by Mr. C. H. Dewey (Wandsworth Borough Council)—

That this conference of representatives from the administrative authorities of London, assembled to consider the question of unemployed labour, desires to direct the attention of His Majesty's Government to the ever-increasing number of undesirable aliens landing in this country, thereby constituting a serious difficulty in dealing with the unemployed labour question, and that it is the sense of this meeting that Parliament should pass a Bill to restrict the immigration of the undesirable unemployed from other countries.

That a copy of this resolution be respectfully submitted to the Members of His Majesty's Government.

The Chairman ruled out of order, on the ground that the questions referred to were being considered by committees of the London County Council, the following—

(a) Notice of motion by Mr. H. A. Collins, one of the delegates appointed by the St. Pancras Borough Council—

That, with a view of giving employment to the unemployed, the London County Council be requested to put in hand forthwith all works for which they have power and authority to execute, including the widening of the southern end of Hampstead-road.

(b) Letter from Mr. J. C. Bailey, one of the delegates appointed by the Stepney Board of Guardians, with reference to certain property acquired by the Council in Ratcliff, in connection with the construction of the Rotherhithe-tunnel.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Mr. A. Main (Poplar Borough Council), and seconded by Mr. W. Crooks (London County Council)—That resolution (a) suggested by the Poplar Borough Council be adopted.

The motion was put to the vote and declared to be carried *nem. con.*

Resolved—That the County Council be recommended to consider if the immigration of the unemployed into London is sufficiently serious to warrant it in addressing county, borough, district and parish councils warnings regarding the overcrowded state of the labour market in London, and in taking any other steps the Council may deem advisable to make the state of the London labour market as widely known as possible.

Moved by Mr. A. Main (Poplar Borough Council), and seconded by Mr. Crooks (London County Council)—That resolution (b) (i.) suggested by the Poplar Borough Council be adopted.

Debate arising, it was

Resolved—That the duration of speeches be limited to five minutes.

After further debate, an amendment was moved by Dr. J. L. Forster (Paddington Guardians) and seconded by Mr. Evan Griffiths (Chelsea Borough Council)—That the following words be omitted from line 2 of the suggested resolution (b) (i.), namely—"work which, if immediately undertaken," and that the following words be substituted therefor—"works which might be undertaken during the two stagnant months of each year, namely, January and February, and which."

After further debate, attention having been called to the fact that Mr. John Burns had been speaking for five minutes, it was

Moved by Mr. Crooks, seconded and

Resolved—That Mr. Burns be allowed to speak for a further period of five minutes.

After further debate, the amendment was put to the vote and declared to be lost.

Further amendment moved by the Rev. P. S. G. Probert (Fulham Guardians) and seconded by Col. J. Goldie (Fulham Guardians)—That, while the question of the unemployment of large masses of men is one which calls for attention and consideration, it is not one that can be best met by either Government or municipal action, but by joint committees called in each municipal district composed of representatives of borough councils, boards of guardians, and representatives of employers and employees, together with expert voluntary workers who shall report to their borough councils, and they to the County Council.

After further discussion,

Mr. Probert asked leave to withdraw the amendment.

Leave refused.

The amendment was then put to the vote and declared to be lost.

The motion, "That resolution (b) (i.) suggested by the Poplar Borough Council be adopted" was then put to the vote, and there appeared—

For the motion, 75; against it, 20. Carried.

Moved and seconded—That resolution (b) (ii.) suggested by the Poplar Borough Council be adopted.

For the motion, 66; against it, 20. Carried.

Resolved—That as the recent cold weather showed how near we are to exceptional distress of a very grave kind, the conference declares that in its opinion local authorities, in co-operation with the Government, should consider what steps can be taken to provide work of public utility so as to keep great numbers of the people profitably employed when private industry fails to do so, and with that end in view the conference recommends as follows—

(i.) That the London County Council and the metropolitan boroughs should draw up schedules of improvements and other work which, if immediately undertaken, would be to the public benefit, and classify the work so as to show what part of it should be borne by the localities, by the localities and the County, by the County Council alone, and finally by the Government alone, or in conjunction with all or any one of these municipal authorities.

(ii.) That the Government be urged to take steps immediately to undertake certain extensive work of public benefit to be carried out in convenient sections with a view both to giving workmen permanent employment away from large cities and to aiding them in times of exceptional distress, such works to include afforestation, reclamation of foreshores, and making of a national road round the coast, etc.

Moved by the Rev. Hubert Curtis (Wandsworth and Clapham Guardians) and seconded by the Rev. J. H. Anderson (Wandsworth Borough Council)—That the resolutions already passed by, and all other matters placed before, the conference, be referred to a committee for consideration, with a view to reporting to a further meeting of the conference.

The motion was put to the vote, and declared to be carried unanimously.

Resolved accordingly.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr. Burns (London County Council), seconded by Mr. A. Main (Poplar Borough Council)—That a Committee of 15 members be appointed.

The following members of the conference were then nominated as members of the committee, and their names having been put to the vote, the voting was as follows—

Burns, John	...	...	...	All	Wetenhall, W. J.	...	...	...	32
Crooks, W.	...	...	...	All	Tomkins, Edward	...	...	...	29
MacDonald, J. R.	...	...	...	67	Hennessey, D.	...	..	...	28
Steadman, W. C.	...	...	...	62	Eickhoff, W.	...	...	...	26
Curtis, Rev. H...	...	...	...	54	Nunn, T. H.	...	...	...	22
Escreet, Canon...	...	...	...	53	Propert, Rev. P. S. G.	...	...	...	17
Foster, Alfred	...	...	...	44	Saunders, A.	...	...	...	15
Bryan, T.	...	...	...	40	Whiter, J. W.	...	...	...	13
Tasker, J.	...	...	...	33	Anderson, Rev. J. H.	...	...	...	11
White, T.	...	...	...	33					

It was thereupon

Resolved—That the following be appointed members of the Committee, namely—

Bryan, T.	Macdonald, J. R.
Burns, John	Nunn, T. H.
Crooks, W.	Steadman, W. C.
Curtis, Rev. H.	Tasker, J.
Eickhoff, W.	Tomkins, Edward
Escreet, Canon	Wetenhall, W. J.
Foster, Alfred	White, T.
Hennessey, D.	

Resolved—That it be an instruction to the committee to report within one month from the present date.

Resolved unanimously—That a hearty vote of thanks be accorded to the chairman of the London County Council for his services in the chair.

CONFERENCE ON LACK OF EMPLOYMENT.

MINUTES of the Proceedings at the Second Meeting of the Conference of Representatives of Administrative Authorities in London, held in the County Hall at Spring Gardens, on **Friday, the 3rd day of April, 1903**, on the subject of the Lack of Employment in London.

PRESENT—

The following representatives of the London County Council—

LORD MONKSWELL, Chairman of the Council, in the Chair.

Mr. E. A. CORNWALL, Vice-Chairman of the Council.

Mr. R. A. ROBINSON, Deputy-Chairman of the Council.

ALLEN, A. A.	DAVIES, W.	NAPIER, T. B.
BURNS, JOHN	DEW, G.	ROTTON, LIEUT.-COL. A.
CLARKE, C. GODDARD	HARRIS, H. P.	SEARS, J. E.
CLELAND, J. W.	MACDONALD, J. R.	STRAUS, B. S.
CROOKS, W.	MULLINS, W. E.	WHITE, E.

The following representatives appointed by the City Corporation, the Metropolitan Borough Councils and the Boards of Guardians—

City Corporation.

Taylor, George

Metropolitan Borough Councils.

Bermondsey ... Stevenson, W.	Lewisham ... Luck, M. S.
Bethnal-green ... Catherall, J. A.	White, T.
	Clark, W. H.
Camberwell ... Baily, Rev. W. Falkner	Poplar ... Bellsham, Job
	Bussey, J.
	Shrimpton, J.
Chelsea ... Egerton, H. E., J.P.	St. Pancras ... Collins, H. A.
	Hennessey, D.
	Griffiths, Evan
Deptford ... Hines, Daniel	Shoreditch ... Winkler, H.
Finsbury ... Chapman, Middleton	Southwark ... Bryan, T., M.A., J.P.
	(Mayor)
	Penny, John
Hammersmith... Edwards, F. A., F.R.G.S.	Stoke Newington Moore, T. H. G.
Hampstead ... Hall, C.	Wandsworth ... Anderson, Rev. J. H.,
	M.A.
	Payne, E. S.
Holborn ... Keen, E. H.	Dewey, C. H.
	Woolwich ... Grinling, C. H.

Boards of Guardians.

Camberwell ... Foster, Alfred (Chairman)	Mile - end Old- Brien, F. W.
	town
	Masterman, C. F. G.
Hammersmith... Howell, John	Poplar ... Chivers, T. C.
	St. George's, Tasker, James
	Neighbour, Wm.
Hampstead ... Nunn, Thomas Hancock	Hanover-square
	Viner, Miss Florence A.
Islington ... Farmer, Miss Lizzie	St. Olave's ... Collins, E.
Kensington ... Keeling, Miss C.	Oakley, W. R.
Lambeth ... Despard, Mrs. C.	St. Pancras ... Wetenhall, W. J., J.P.
Lewisham ... Flood, R. M.	Wandsworth and Curtis, Rev. H., M.A.
	Clapham Gray, Mrs. Mary
	Kennard, R.
	Woolwich ... Escreet, Rev. Canon

Minutes.

1. The minutes of the first meeting of the Conference, held on 13th February, 1903, were confirmed and signed.
2. *Report of the Committee appointed at the meeting of the Conference held on 13th February, 1903.

25th March, 1903.

The following are the members of the Committee, viz.,—

BRYAN, T. (Southwark Borough Council).	MACDONALD, J. R. (London County Council, Finsbury).
BURNS, JOHN (London County Council, Battersea).	NUNN, T. H. (Hampstead Guardians).
CROOKS, W. (London County Council, Poplar).	STEADMAN, W. C. (London County Council, Stepney).
CURTIS, REV. H. (Wandsworth and Clapham Guardians).	TASKER, J. (St. George's, Hanover-square, Guardians).
EICKHOFF, W. (Bethnal-green Guardians).	TOMKINS, EDWARD (Islington Guardians).
ESCREET, CANON (Woolwich Guardians).	WETENHALL, W. J. (St. Pancras Guardians).
FOSTER, ALFRED (Camberwell Guardians).	WHITE, T. (Lewisham Borough Council).
HENNESSEY, D. (St. Pancras Borough Council).	

Introduction.

1.—Before proceeding to the consideration of the various matters referred to the Committee by the Conference, a brief description of the plan and scope of this report will be necessary.

The resolution appointing the Committee is as follows—

That the resolutions already passed by, and all other matters placed before, the conference, be referred to a committee for consideration, with a view to reporting to a further meeting of the conference.

The various matters referred to in this resolution may be enumerated under 12 different heads which are set out below, but we have thought that it will be the desire of the Conference that we should preface our report on these various matters with a short discussion of some of the general considerations which surround this important question. This is accordingly done under the following heads in paragraphs (2) to (5)—

Evidence of abnormal distress from want of employment (§ 2).

Meaning and classification of the "unemployed" (§ 3).

Existing agencies for dealing with the unemployed (§ 4).

Official inquiries which have been made in the past on the question (§ 5).

The subjects referred to us by the resolution above referred to are dealt with in paragraphs 6 to 17, and are as follows, the Conference having itself passed definite resolutions on the subjects referred to under the first two heads—

Relief works (§ 6).

The immigration of unemployed from the country (§ 7).

Alien immigration (§ 8).

Expediting with as little publicity as possible public works by local authorities, especially work like house-building, which would employ different classes of skilled labour (§ 9).

The suggestion that guardians should train the surplus town population in the needs and ways of country life—migration and emigration (§ 10).

The question of conferring power upon boards of guardians to take land for the purpose of providing work in times of want (§ 11).

Equalisation of rates (§ 12).

The establishment of registers of workmen out of work—the distinction between temporarily and chronically unemployed (§ 13).

The appointment of a representative standing committee (§ 14).

The question of calling a National Conference (§ 15).

The appointment of a Minister of Industry (§ 16).

Deputation to His Majesty's Government (§ 17).

In addition to these we have thought it well to bring the following matters before the Conference—

Reduction of hours of labour (§ 18).

Wages of unskilled workers (§ 19).

Period at which the militia are embodied for training (§ 20).

Lack of employment among women (§ 21).

Employment of children (§ 22).

Desirability of the establishment of a more complete organisation whereby the industrial conditions of the country could from time to time be accurately ascertained (§ 23).

Economical difficulties of the poor (§ 24).

Paragraph 25 is a general summary, and at the end of the report are various appendices which are referred to in the paragraphs to which they respectively relate.

The conference instructed us to report within one month from the date of its meeting. The time allowed, however, was not sufficient to enable us to prepare a comprehensive report for the consideration of the conference, and we regret therefore that it was not practicable to comply with this order.

* The action taken by the Conference on the consideration of the report of the Committee is shown on page 41.

Evidence of abnormal distress.

2.—There do not appear to be available any statistics of the whole labour market from which comparisons may be drawn, but the official figures from two sources will probably act as a guide, to a certain extent, in this direction. In the first place there are the statistics relating to pauperism and in the second place the Board of Trade publish a return each month in the *Labour Gazette*, showing the percentage of unemployed members of those trade unions which make returns to the department.

The monthly statements issued by the Local Government Board on pauperism in England and Wales, show the ratio per 1,000 inhabitants, of paupers in receipt of relief in London, and a table has been prepared showing this ratio on the last day of each month since the year 1893. (See Appendix I.) A table has also been prepared (Appendix II.) showing the exact number of persons in London receiving poor law relief in each month of the years 1893, 1901 and 1902, and during January and February of the present year. It is to be assumed that these figures will represent, to a certain extent, distress among members of the worst organised labouring classes who are driven into the workhouse in consequence of want of employment, and therefore it is of importance for the present purpose to observe the following comparisons. The number of paupers in February was 115,641, which was over 5,000 more than in the corresponding month of last year and over 8,000 more than in February, 1901. The figure 115,641 represents a ratio of nearly 24·9 per 1,000 inhabitants, whereas the similar ratios for the corresponding months of 1902 and 1901 are 24·3 and 23·4 respectively.

Going to the other extreme of the labour market, and dealing with the organised skilled trades which have their unions providing "unemployed benefit," the official figures quoted in the Board of Trade publications show that the percentage of the members of the trades unions returned as having been unemployed during the three last months of 1902 was higher than it has been at any time since 1895. The percentage for last month was 4·8, and for the corresponding months of 1902 and 1901 4·3 and 3·9 respectively. A table showing the figures since 1903 is attached to this report (Appendix III).

With reference to the figures relating to trade unions, however, it must be borne in mind that they do not represent the total lack of employment among members of the organised trades, inasmuch as many of the unions pay no "unemployed benefit," and do not usually keep any exact record of the numbers of their members unemployed. We understand that only those unions which are able to furnish such exact figures are included in the statistics published by the Board of Trade and above referred to.

The full official returns relating to the following representative industries, which will, no doubt, be of interest as giving more exact information with regard to the number of men unemployed, are also appended (Appendices IV. and V.)—

- (1.) Carpenters and joiners.
- (2.) Plumbers.
- (3.) Shipbuilders.
- (4.) Dockers and riverside labourers.

With regard to the carpenters and joiners, the percentage returned as unemployed during last month is 5·1, compared with 3·2 in February, 1902, and of the plumbers 14·5 per cent. were unemployed last month, compared with 7·2 per cent. in 1902. It will be observed that in the shipbuilding industry the percentage of unemployed is lower this year than last, so far as the month of February is concerned, but during January, 1903, the percentage was 10·9, as compared with 6·0 in January, 1902.

A considerable amount of distress appears to prevail among the dockers and riverside labourers, as will be seen from the following figures representing the average number employed per week during various months—

February, 1903	12,373	February, 1902	14,696
January, 1903	13,079	January, 1902	16,253
December, 1902... ..	14,693		

Between the two great classes of labour, namely, the highly-organised trades and the lowest of the unskilled and unorganised workers, there is no doubt a large intermediary class with regard to whom no exact figures can be given. They meet exceptional distress in a variety of ways. When they do not rely on the poor law, they fall back upon shrinkage in their home accommodation and in food, employment in what casual labour they can pick up, the employment of their wives and children in labour of the sweating class, and generally in unsatisfactory methods of meeting their distress. Probably the figures quoted above relating to the two classes in respect of which official information is obtainable, will form a guide to the existing state of the labour market as regards all other classes of employment.

It should be remembered that Mr. Llewellyn Smith, the Commissioner of Labour, stated in 1895-6 that about 2 per cent. of the labouring population were out of work at the best of times.

While there can be no doubt whatever that distress from lack of employment does exist, it is satisfactory to observe that, so far as the returns of the trade unions show (Appendix III.) this distress does not reach the extent which prevailed from 1893 to 1895. But we would take the opportunity of expressing our emphatic opinion that the problems which may at any time arise owing to exceptional distress of this character should be most carefully considered at the present time in order that a solution may be forthcoming before it is too late to take steps in the direction desired and in order that anything approaching "panic legislation" on the subject may be avoided.

Meaning and classification of the want of employment..

3.—A report issued by the Board of Trade in 1893 on the Agencies and Methods for Dealing with the Unemployed contains a short discussion as to the meaning of the term "unemployed," lack of

employment being recognised as resulting from various and distinct causes. Summarising the results of the consideration of this question, the report contains the following statement—

“ We may say that the term ‘unemployed’ is used in four distinct senses, though, of course the classes of persons corresponding to each definition overlap to a greater or less extent.

“ (1) Those whose engagements, being for short periods, have terminated their last engagement on the conclusion of a job and have not yet entered on another.

“ (2) Those who belong to trades in which the volume of work fluctuates, and who, though they may obtain a full share during each year of the work afforded by their industry, are not at the given time able to get work at their trade.

“ (3) Those members of various trades who are economically superfluous, because there is not enough work in those trades to furnish a fair amount to all who try to earn a livelihood at them.

“ (4) Those who cannot get work because they are below the standard of efficiency usual in their trades, or because their personal defects are such that no one will employ them.” [Board of Trade report, 1893, pages 9-10.]

The following paragraph in the same section of the report is of interest—

“ If, however, it is difficult to attach any precise meaning to the term ‘unemployed,’ which shall be applicable to all trades and industries, and if no sharp dividing line can be drawn between those out of work and those whose employment is casual and insufficient, it may at least be said that, so far as the existence of unemployed persons offers any social problem for solution, the essence of the problem consists in the fact that the relation between the supply and demand for any particular kind of labour in any particular place is a fluctuating one.”

Agencies for dealing with the unemployed.

4.—The following classification of the agencies professing to deal with want of employment is given in the section of the Board of Trade report [pages 12-16] above referred to—

(i) The various trade societies which deal mainly with the efficient unemployed members of various trades who are at any given time under ordinary circumstances out of a job.

(ii) To a much more limited extent, friendly societies.

(iii) Labour bureaux, under which head would be classed registries for domestic servants, and also the employment agencies supplied by the advertisement columns of the newspapers.

(iv) Agencies for dealing with the unemployed owing to trade fluctuations of a more or less exceptional character. These divide themselves into two heads, namely—

(a) Those of a permanent character, and

(b) Those of a temporary character.

(a) *Permanent*—These may be classified as follows—Poor Law system; Charity Organisation Society and its affiliated associations; and other voluntary associations.

(b) *Temporary*—Under this head may be mentioned the schemes of municipalities or voluntary agencies for providing temporary employment for the unemployed.

(v) Labour colonies.

(vi) Agencies which aim at the assistance of particular classes of persons, for example, associations for finding employment for discharged soldiers, etc.

A short statement of the methods of the following of these agencies may be of use—(i) trade societies, (ii) friendly societies, (iii) labour bureaux, (iv) poor law system, (v) Charity Organisation Society, (vi) municipal relief works, (vii) labour colonies.

Trade societies.

The report of the chief labour correspondent of the Board of Trade on trade unions indicates the extent to which the trade unions provide unemployed benefit, and a table is attached showing the expenditure incurred by the 100 principal trade unions in this direction during the ten years 1892-1901. (Appendix VI.)

The report referred to states that there is, of course, an intimate relation between the general condition of the trade of the country and this important branch of trade union expenditure, and in appendix VII. is set out a table which brings together the expenditure on unemployed benefit (total and per head of membership) by the 100 principal trade unions, the average percentage of unemployed in the trade unions making returns on this point, and the total declared value of imports and exports. Another table, contained in the same report, sets out the percentage of expenditure on various heads of the 100 principal trade unions during the ten years 1892-1901, and from this it appears that of the total expenditure during the term, 21·7 per cent. (representing a total of about £3,000,000) was made in respect of unemployed benefit. These figures show that at any rate in some of the organised trades the workers themselves make considerable efforts for meeting periods of depression.

Friendly societies.

The action taken by friendly societies, in the direction of affording relief to its unemployed members, appears to be practically in foregoing the current contributions to the funds of the society, and it is the custom, in at least one of the societies, for the members to contribute to a special provident fund by means of which any member of one year's standing or upwards who is unable to pay his current contributions to the society may lay his case before the Committee, who have discretionary powers to remit the payments due to any amount not exceeding one quarter's contribution. (Hearts of Oak Benefit Society.)

To quote from the report issued by the Board of Trade in 1893 [page 96] and referred to above—"In some other societies efforts are made to relieve unemployed members by payment of "subscriptions out of the funds or in some other way. . . . The majority, however, of friendly "societies make little or no attempt to deal with the question, or if anything is done it is not provided "for by the general rules, but is a matter of local arrangement by the branches."

Labour bureaux.

Since the date of the Board of Trade report of 1893, the conditions under which labour bureaux exist in London have been placed on a more satisfactory footing by the passing of the Labour Bureaux (London) Act, 1902, which gives the borough councils definite power to establish these offices. Communications have been addressed to each of the metropolitan borough councils, asking for information as to the steps which they have taken in the matter, and the results are tabulated in Appendix VIII. In the majority of instances the bureaux have been established too recently to enable a proper estimate to be formed of their usefulness, but it appears that they are used to only the slightest extent by private employers.

In the 1893 report of the Board of Trade, the following observations were made in the concluding summary of the section on labour bureaux [page 113].

"With the best of conditions, labour bureaux can hardly be expected ever to become the sole or principal means of bringing together employers and unemployed. The bulk of the work of hiring labour and seeking employment will in most trades continue to be done directly between workmen and employers, as is the case even in countries where, as in France, the system of bureaux has been carried much further than in the United Kingdom. Nor as regards the organised trades can labour bureaux as a rule compare in utility, so far as workmen are concerned, with the work of a well-managed trade society, such as some of those described in a previous section. The chief field of usefulness of labour bureaux is likely, therefore, to be found for some time to come in the less highly organised trades. Limited, however, as the functions of labour bureaux may be, there is no reason to suppose that they have anything like reached their limits, and in the present experimental stage of the problem it is desirable to encourage and watch every carefully devised fresh experiment in this direction."

Poor-law relief.

The official machinery for relieving distress is, of course, by means of the Poor-law authorities. These authorities are responsible for dealing with distress from whatever cause it may arise, and for this purpose they have at their disposal the following machinery, namely—

- (1) The workhouse.
- (2) Out-door relief given in return for labour performed.

It is important to remember that in the matter of providing *work* the hands of the guardians are tied inasmuch as such work is only given as *relief*, and entails all the disqualifications and stigma which arise from any other assistance from the Poor law.

With regard to out-door relief, the following extracts from a memorandum prepared in 1886 by Sir Hugh Owen, describe the rules applying to the relief of able-bodied male persons, and the practice of guardians in relation thereto.

"The regulations in force in the metropolis and the great centres of population are contained in the Out Relief Regulation Order [1852]. That Order provides—

"(1) That no relief shall be given to any able-bodied male person while he is employed for wages or other hire or remuneration by any person.

"(2) That every able-bodied male person, if relieved out of the workhouse, shall be set to work by the guardians, and be kept employed under their direction and superintendence so long as he continues to receive relief.

"(3) That the observance of the foregoing regulations shall not be imperative in the following cases—

"(a) The case of a person receiving relief on account of sudden and urgent necessity;

"(b) The case of a person receiving relief on account of any sickness, accident, or bodily or mental infirmity affecting such person or any of his family; and

"(c) The case of a person receiving relief for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the burial of any of his family.

"(4) That whenever the guardians allow relief to any able-bodied male person out of the workhouse, one-half at least of the relief so allowed shall be given in articles of food or fuel, or in other articles of absolute necessity.

"(5.) That when the guardians set able-bodied male persons to work under the above regulations, they shall within 30 days report to the Local Government Board the place or places at which the able-bodied paupers are set to work, the sort or sorts of work in which they or any of them are employed, the times and mode of work, and the provision made for superintending them while working; and shall forthwith discontinue or alter the same if the Local Government Board shall so require.

"Further, the Order, with the view of meeting cases of an exceptional character, provides that if the guardians shall, upon consideration of the special circumstances of any particular case, deem it expedient to depart from any of the above regulations, and within 21 days after the departure shall report the same and the grounds thereof to the Local Government Board, the relief which may have been so given in such case by such guardians before the answer to the report shall have been returned by the Board, shall not be deemed to be contrary to the provisions of the Order; and if the Local

“ Government Board shall approve of the departure, and shall notify such approval to the guardians, all relief given in such case after such notification, so far as the same shall be in accordance with the terms and conditions of the approval, shall be lawful, anything in the Order to the contrary notwithstanding.

“ It will be observed, therefore, that the guardians in the case of the unions to which the Order applies are not precluded from granting out-relief to able-bodied male persons who require it in consequence of being out of employment, subject to the condition that such persons shall be set to work by the guardians and be kept employed under their directions and supervision, so long as they continue to receive relief.

“ In other unions, comprising chiefly agricultural districts and towns with a small population, relief is administered under the General Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order. That Order requires that every able-bodied male pauper shall be relieved wholly in the workhouse of the union, except in the following cases—

“ (1) Where such person shall require relief on account of sudden and urgent necessity.

“ (2) Where such person shall require relief on account of any sickness, accident, or bodily or mental infirmity affecting himself or any of his family; and,

“ (3) Where such person shall require relief for the purpose of defraying the expenses, either wholly or in part, of the burial of any of his family.

“ In the case of this Order, also, there is a proviso to meet cases of an exceptional character. The Order provides that in case the guardians of any union depart in any particular instance from any of the regulations, and within fifteen days after such departure report the same and the grounds thereof to the Local Government Board, and the Board approve of the departure, the relief granted in such particular instances shall, if otherwise lawful, not be deemed to be unlawful or be subject to be disallowed.

“ In the case of certain unions to which the regulations in the General Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order apply, an Outdoor Labour Test Order has been issued. This Order is intended to provide for exceptional circumstances, which, in the opinion of the guardians, render it necessary to give outdoor relief to able-bodied male persons. Where it is in force the granting of outdoor relief to such persons is subject to conditions similar to those in the outdoor relief regulations above referred to, the chief condition being that any such person so relieved shall be set to work by the guardians.

“ The principle on which the several Orders referred to are based is that able-bodied male persons shall only receive relief from the poor rates, on the ground of being out of employment, subject to such a test of destitution as is involved in the acceptance of an order for admission to the workhouse or the performance of a task of work.” [Board of Trade Report, 1893.]

Charity Organisation Society.

The 1893 report of the Board of Trade contains a section [pages 146-159] on the methods of the Charity Organisation Society and the kindred associations in relation to the unemployed, but the following extracts from a pamphlet issued in October last by the secretary of the Society will briefly indicate the attitude of the Society towards the subject—

“ The means of offering employment on any large scale through charitable agencies is extremely limited; and even if it were not, the provision of employment, except to meet a crisis, cannot be undertaken by them without doing more harm than good. But charitable persons and societies have a definite duty in this matter, which should be fulfilled.

“ Roughly speaking, applications come from three classes—

“ (1) Thrifty and careful men.

“ (2) Men of different grades of respectability.

“ (3) The idle, loafing class, or those brought low by drink or vice.

“ The poor law guardians, as has been said, should be the recognised centre in each union for dealing with destitution owing to want of work or other causes.

“ All will agree that class (3) should be left to them. Many will agree that the larger part of the rather vague class (2) should be left to them.

“ It may be concluded that the conditions of good administration as to classes (2) and (3) will, therefore, be met by an arrangement being made with the board of guardians that all exceptional cases in class (2) should be referred by the relieving officers to some charitable society in co-operation with them.

“ There remains, then, class (1) only. These, like the exceptional cases in class (2), should be dealt with by organised charity, after proper inquiry, from whatever quarter they come. By organised charity is meant a local, and, as far as possible, representative, association, which is ready to take the responsibility of dealing with these cases as thoroughly as possible.

“ The cases will, it may be safely asserted, be comparatively few, and it will be quite within the scope and strength of a local association, acting in concert with the clergy and ministers, trade societies and recognised metropolitan associations, to deal with them adequately.

“ The help given would be various, as, for instance, assistance in migration or emigration, temporary allowances where there is a reasonable prospect of a return to employment after a short time, or any help that is likely to lead to permanent results.”

Provision of temporary employment for the unemployed by municipal authorities and others.

In exceptional periods of distress public authorities have made special efforts to provide work for the unemployed, and the Local Government Board have issued circulars on the subject. One of these circulars was issued to the guardians by Mr. Chamberlain in 1836, and another by Sir Henry Fowler in 1892 to all the local authorities and boards of guardians in England and Wales. The latter circular is thought to be of sufficient interest to set out in full, and this is done in Appendix IX. The Local Government Board subsequently made inquiries as to the measures taken by the various authorities in the directions indicated in the circular, and a statement, compiled from the 1893 Report of the Board of Trade, has been prepared giving particulars of the work provided during the winter of 1892-3 for the purpose of relieving the unemployed by the local authorities in London (Appendix X.).

The following extract from the concluding summary on Municipal Relief Works in the 1893 Report [pages 236-237] contains much instructive matter—

“ It is not claimed on behalf of any of the schemes hitherto described that they have proved a permanent cure for the evils of want of employment; they were not in fact, for the most part, regarded in this light by their promoters.

“ The conclusions to be drawn from the experiments of so many local authorities during the past winter are therefore largely negative. It appears, for example, to be conclusively shown (as was indeed already known to those familiar with the subject) that the offer of work without discrimination to all applicants is likely to attract large numbers of a class for whom it is unlikely to be of permanent benefit. Many (though not all) of the local authorities who carried out relief works during the past winter were sufficiently alive to this fact to attempt some kind of sifting process, though the tests applied were not always of a very searching character. It would appear, moreover, that the inquiry was usually merely directed to ascertain fitness for employment on the relief works, and did not extend to the question of the possibility of permanent assistance. In the view of many of those whose experience in these matters is the greatest, the relative importance of the relief works and of the inquiry should be reversed if any permanent good is sought for, the relief work being looked on as one means out of many of ascertaining fitness for permanent assistance, instead of the inquiry being looked on merely as a means of ascertaining fitness for temporary relief-work. If this view is sound the relief work would be regarded essentially as a labour test, although provided in the form of employment for wages.

“ Some persons have objected to stringent inquiry as inquisitorial, and, doubtless, such inquiry needs much tact and judgment. Perhaps, however, the evils which have resulted from its absence or insufficiency may be considered to outweigh any objections of this kind. It does not appear that the mere test of work, in any form in which it is likely to be applied, is a complete or satisfactory substitute for inquiry, if the permanent assistance of the individual be the ultimate object kept in view.

“ Secondly, it would appear that the success or otherwise of the relief works themselves is very largely a question of supervision and administration. More foremen and gangers, and more careful (though not harsher) discipline, seem to be required than on ordinary work, whereas in practice there is often a tendency for the management to be less strict.

“ Thirdly, if we regard the provision of work as a test of willingness to labour, it would appear that, other things being equal, the best shape which it can take is that which shall provide the most effective test for the purpose. Now the most searching of tests appears to be *continuity of employment*. Loafers and tramps are not unwilling to do a couple of days' work—even hard work; and many who will work for weeks together three days in each week would be weeded out if they were compelled to work every day. This being so, schemes which merely provide a few days' work for a large number of men in successive relays are of all others the most likely to be abused. They offer work in the form which exactly suits those who are unwilling to submit to continuous exertion, while doing very little for those really in distress. The plan of employing men in two shifts—three days a week each—is recommended on the ground that it gives them a chance to look out for work during the rest of the week; but against this very real advantage must be set the encouragement offered to loafers by an arrangement which falls in with their habits.

“ To sum up, the special danger which temporary schemes of municipal employment have to face is that they may fail to attract the class of unemployed whose distress is merely caused by temporary difficulties over which the individuals have no control, while they are unlikely to be organised and administered with sufficient completeness and elasticity to enable them to be of service for the lasting assistance or reformation of the chronically idle and incapable.”

Labour colonies.

With regard to labour colonies the Board of Trade Report of 1893 [page 14] contains the following statements—

“ Permanent agencies for the provision of work for the unemployed, whether in labour colonies or in special workshops, do not exist to any great extent in the United Kingdom, though schemes and proposals for their foundation are continually being formulated. . . .

“ The labour colony system can, however, be best studied in certain foreign countries where it has assumed much larger dimensions than in the United Kingdom, and the present position of the labour colonies of Germany, Holland, Belgium, and France is therefore, described in detail in Professor Mayor's report. . . . It will be gathered

“from that report that whatever be the object of these colonies, the great bulk of the material with which they deal consists not of efficient workmen out of work, but of tramps, ex-prisoners, and others whose distress is caused by personal defects. They are not colonies of unemployed so much as receptacles for social wreckage.”

In the Report in question particulars are given with regard to the following—

The Social Wing of the Salvation Army.

The Church Army Labour Homes.

Training Farm at Langley, Essex.

Home Colonization Society.

It is not possible in the present report to enter into the detailed organisation and methods of these institutions, but the following extract from the 1893 report [page 160] on the Salvation Army may be of interest—

“The operations of the ‘social wing’ may be divided into three departments more or less connected with each other; first, the ‘national labour exchange’ conducted at headquarters in connection with the night shelters; secondly, the two workshops or ‘elevators’ into which a certain proportion of those registered at the labour exchange are drafted; and, thirdly, the farm colony in Essex, on which are employed a certain number of men from the ‘elevator’ workshops, together with a few who apply direct to the farm.

“In many essential respects this scheme for dealing with the unemployed will be found to differ both in conception and in practice from the policy of the societies described in the preceding chapter. Apart from the specific religious basis on which it rests, the Salvation Army scheme is highly centralised, in contrast with the Charity Organisation plan of localisation; its most important feature is the direct provision of temporary work, and the whole machinery forms a self-contained group of institutions working independently of other organisations, rather than attempting systematically to utilise or federate existing agencies. The careful inquiry respecting applicants for assistance, which is one of the chief features in the work of the Charity Organisation Society, occupies a very subordinate place in the Salvation Army scheme, the test of work being in the main relied on to take the place both of inquiry and verification.”

With regard to the Salvation Army, however, it must be borne in mind that the object of the farm colony at Hadleigh is rather to restore to industrial life than to provide work for the general unemployed.

The object of the Church Army Labour Homes similarly is to deal with “the abject and apparently hopeless.”

The Training Farm at Langley is described as “an attempt, on a small scale, to train a certain number of the unemployed in farming work, with a view to emigration to Canada,” and out of 72 cases accepted for the farm between May, 1891, and June, 1893, 39 were sent, after about six or eight weeks’ training, to Canadian farms, and one to New Zealand. Out of the men thus sent to the colonies, it is stated that only three were reported as unsatisfactory. We understand, however, that the Farm has not been continued, and only acted as a temporary expedient to deal with a period of exceptional distress.

In connection with the subject of Labour Colonies, practical suggestions were made by Canon Barnett, in a letter which appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* of 16th March, 1903, from which the following are extracts—

“The first thing necessary is to replace the workhouses and casual wards with what may be called ‘labour schools.’ Of these there should be two descriptions—one for men and women under restraint, and one for men free to come and go at their own will. These labour schools should be established in the country so that there might be ample provision for air and exercise, but in both the school of restraint and in the school of freedom facilities should be offered for training in varieties of work, indoors and on the land, and both might be under the control of governors appointed by the County Council and the Local Government Board, and be supported partly by the rates and partly by a grant from the Treasury.

“The school of restraint would—broadly speaking—be for men and women who, being homeless, apply for relief. These people are now liable to restraint during certain hours in casual wards; the period of such restraint should be extended, and after the second or third application should be made to cover three or four years. The inmates of the school would be well fed, enjoy outdoor exercise, have the means of recreation, receive medical attention, be educated, and, above all things, be trained in such work as would enlist their interest. Experience has, for instance, proved that wayward men will quite eagerly work at laying out a new garden with its paths and beds. The work seems to touch the creative faculty which has been lying dormant. Other men and women have been shown to have an art sense which delights in decorative work, and may have had their whole nature roused by the care of animals. The school would supply every inducement likely to bring out capacities; it would aim at curing by development rather than by repression, but it would be a school of restraint. There would be no going out during the period of detention.

“The school of freedom would—again broadly speaking—be for men who had established homes of their own. It would be set up—either in barracks or in huts—on a broad acreage of unreclaimed or derelict land, of which we are told that there is in England an undue proportion. The men—and for obvious administrative reasons no provision could be made for women—would be put to work, and money sufficient for the full upkeep of their homes sent by sure hands to their wives. The work given would be fitted to the respective abilities of the workers, and would never be of a degrading sort. Hope would be the universal lever, as fear is now the lever, and hope might be given a

“ definite form. Part of the general work would probably be the building of small homesteads and reclaiming the surrounding land to fit it as a garden. The hope of the tenancy of such homesteads and gardens might then be held out to men who proved their qualifications for country life; or the offer of a free passage to the colonies might be made to those who had fitted themselves for emigration.

“ The men occupying these labour schools would thus have about them every appliance and every influence necessary for health and growth. They would do work which would strengthen themselves, keep up their homes, and also develop the country, but they would have to submit to live apart from their families. This condition which is necessary for reasons of administration, is also necessary as a check on such abuses as those which are attached to relief works. The indoor test, as it is called, may have been discredited by the humiliations imposed, and by the character of the labour required, but it is right in principle and seems to be the only means by which a solid determination can be proved and a weak will strengthened. There is, however, no reason why a man should not be allowed at regular intervals to visit his home and find work for himself.”

The advantages claimed for this scheme are—

(1.) Workhouses and casual wards would be remodelled after the likeness of schools instead of after the likeness of prisons, as at present.

(2.) The scheme opening a door of hope to everyone, there would no longer be the same call for shelters, for free meals, and for casual relief which now so often keep the poor in a condition of hopeless distress.

(3.) The scheme, while its chief object is the improvement of the individual, does use such labour as he can offer for the common good.

(4.) The scheme opens a new avenue through which personal service may reach individual needs.

The question of labour colonies is an extensive one, and we have not been able to give it sufficient consideration to submit any recommendations with regard thereto. But, while we do not necessarily endorse the various suggestions above referred to, we have thought it right, in order to complete this section of the report, to briefly allude to the subject as forming one of the “ agencies for dealing with the unemployed.”

In dealing with such a variety of suggestions all involving the employment of the individual by public authorities, it may not seem undesirable to draw the following distinctions—

I. *Poor law relief conditional upon employment* is specially devised to render the lot of the recipient less eligible than that of the independent labourer. It is given for the relief of the recipient, and not in exchange for the work, which is intended to operate as a test of destitution.

II. *The economic wages of the public employee* are true earnings given in return for work done in connection with necessary public services, not for the benefit of the recipient, but in exchange for the work. The best available men should be employed and the best work demanded.

III. *The wages of men employed upon relief works* are chiefly relief, being given primarily for the sake of the recipients. Under certain circumstances they may become true earnings. Enquiry, piecework, and short but daily regular hours are the means taken for preventing the subsidence of labour upon relief works.

IV. *The work performed in labour homes and farm colonies* is partly a test of character and partly training. Any rewards earned are of the nature of prizes for proficiency or conduct, and not wages.

Official reports made in the past bearing on the subject.

5.—The most recent official report on the subject of the unemployed is that of the Select Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, which was issued in July, 1896. Before this, the Royal Commission on Labour, 1891–1894, although they did not consider that the question of the want of employment was within the scope of their inquiry, had made certain observations and recommendations on the subject. In 1893 the valuable report, to which reference has already been made, was issued by the Board of Trade on the Agencies and Methods for dealing with the Unemployed.

The various observations and recommendations which are made in the reports and which have not already been quoted, arrange themselves under the various heads set out in paragraph 1, and are therefore dealt with in the following paragraphs to which they respectively relate.

Relief works.

6.—The conference passed the following resolution—

That as the recent cold weather showed how near we are to exceptional distress of a very grave kind, the conference declares that, in its opinion, local authorities, in co-operation with the Government, should consider what steps can be taken to provide work of public utility so as to keep great numbers of the people profitably employed when private industry fails to do so, and with that end in view the conference recommends as follows—

(i.) That the London County Council and the metropolitan boroughs should draw up schedules of improvements and other work which, if immediately undertaken, would be to the public benefit, and classify the work so as to show what part of it should be borne by the localities, by the localities and the County, by the County Council alone, and finally by the Government alone, or in conjunction with all or any one of these municipal authorities.

(ii.) That the Government be urged to take steps immediately to undertake certain extensive work of public benefit to be carried out in convenient sections with a view

both to giving workmen permanent employment away from large cities and to aiding them in times of exceptional distress, such works to include afforestation, reclamation of foreshores, and making of a national road round the coast, etc.

The question of relief works undertaken by public authorities has already been referred to (p. 21).

The Royal Commission on Labour, which reported in 1894, referred to the question in terms which were to the following effect [Final report of the Commission, Part I., page 103]—The plan of public authorities starting new works in a hurry during periods of commercial depression must be regarded with some anxiety on account of its wastefulness and other evils; but with a little forethought public authorities might during more prosperous times prepare plans for works that are needed but are not urgent, and hold them in readiness for times of depression.

The Select Committee on Distress from Want of Employment recommended in 1896 that any relief work which might be undertaken should be conducted on the piece-work system, and further, that the hours of labour of this work should be shorter than the ordinary working hours, thereby providing an incentive to men employed on the relief works to resume their ordinary avocations at the earliest possible moment. Moreover, such an arrangement would give facilities to the men of seeking opportunities for a return to their ordinary work [Report of the Select Committee, pages x-xi].

It certainly appears to be sound policy to insist that it should be an essential feature of relief works that they should be necessary to the community, that they should not be commenced in a hurry, and that they should be of such a nature that they may be stopped for a period without damage to their ultimate value and use. In a word, work should not be invented.

With regard to the first portion of the resolution, it would appear to be very desirable that the various authorities in London should at once take steps to consider as to what works could *usefully* be undertaken in their respective districts in times of exceptional distress, and there are probably many works, such as the raising of marshy land, the cleansing and improvement of streams, etc., which might properly be carried out in this way.

The question of undertaking the larger relief works which are referred to in the second part of the resolution, appears to be one which requires very careful consideration, but such a system as that proposed in paragraph (23) would appear to provide the machinery which would enable the question of these schemes to receive the most practical treatment. Each locality would be in a position to deal with the matter, and would be in a position to submit, if necessary, definite schemes for the consideration of the central authority, while, at the same time, any purely local schemes could be carried out by the local authority.

But it would appear that in another way public authorities already have within their power opportunities of doing a great deal of good in the direction of meeting temporary depressions of trade. The amount of work that is carried out by these authorities in the various departments which they administer is in London very considerable, and much of this work could doubtless be done just as efficiently and cheaply in the slack seasons as in the busy times, and it is thought that it would be a great assistance in the direction now desired if these authorities made a practice of not executing during the busy time any work which could equally well be done during the winter or slack periods.

Thus, for instance, there are probably over 3,000 public buildings in London, work in connection with the internal cleaning of which might very well be postponed until the slack months. Among such buildings may be included the following—

Churches and chapels	...	...	...	...	1,700
Schools (public and private)	...	...	...	...	1,000
Fire stations, and weights and measures offices...	...	...	...	...	80
Town halls	...	...	...	...	30
Libraries	...	...	...	...	70
Baths and washhouses	...	...	...	...	44
Hospitals	...	...	...	...	80
Workhouses	...	...	...	...	44
Mortuaries	...	...	...	...	48

Again, the painting and cleansing of the great railway stations lend themselves to the conditions of winter employment, as they can be done under cover. And we understand that in the case of, at any rate, two of the large railway companies, a substantial benefit was conferred on the labouring classes by work of this kind being recently put in hand at a time when exceptional slackness of work would otherwise have prevailed.

It has for the last few years been a rule of the London County Council to postpone whatever work can be postponed to the winter season, so that during the rest of the year the pressure of municipal work does not compete with that of private enterprise, while during the winter months it can be accomplished to the mutual benefit of the workers and the Council.

It is important that such a system should be adopted universally, and in a systematic manner, so that the present large and periodic influx of labour from the country might be avoided and the responsibility thrown upon each locality for dealing with its own problem. By this means also the slack times of private enterprise would coincide with the periods of greater activity in public works, and this would tend to maintain a level of employment throughout the whole year.

We recommend—

That the County Council be recommended—

- (i.) To prepare, for execution during periods of distress, schemes of public works which may usefully be carried out in the County.
- (ii.) To invite the borough councils to prepare similar schemes of a local character.
- (iii.) To ask the Government to consider the question of preparing similar schemes of a national character.
- (iv.) To address communications to the various public authorities in London suggesting the desirability of public work being carried out as far as practicable during the "slack" season and further, to consider the expediency of taking steps with a view to similar action being taken by public authorities throughout the country.

Immigration from the country of unemployed persons.

7.—On this subject the Conference passed the following resolution—

That the County Council be recommended to consider if the immigration of the unemployed into London is sufficiently serious to warrant it in addressing county, borough, district and parish councils warnings regarding the overcrowded state of the labour market in London, and in taking any other steps the Council may deem advisable to make the state of the London labour market as widely known as possible.

It does not appear that the proposal contained in this resolution to address communications to the county, borough, district and parish councils on the subject of the overcrowded state of the labour market in London is calculated to have the effect of making that condition of things very widely known. It certainly appears desirable that some steps should be taken in this direction, and it is suggested that this end could probably best be met by endeavouring to secure greater publicity to the official returns which appear each month in the "Labour Gazette," and that, therefore, the newspapers and various public libraries, in addition to the town and other councils above referred to, should be invited to take whatever steps they are able in that direction.

In addition to this, it might be made a duty of the local authority in each town or district to acquire information on the subject on the application of any resident who states his or her intention to migrate to another town or district. By this means some of the difficulty might be remedied, and gradually as the local authorities put into force their powers it might be almost entirely obviated. This suggestion might be more effectively carried out if the organisation proposed in paragraph 23 were adopted.

In this connection we would take the opportunity of calling attention to the great desirability of men discharged from the army seeking employment in their native counties. We understand that it is the practice of at any rate one of the societies working for the benefit of discharged soldiers, viz., the Soldiers and Sailors Help Society, to endeavour to obtain work for the men in question in this way, and, indeed, this society has branches and "friends" spread in a complete network in each county and district. But if any additional means could be found for persuading the men to abandon their desire of seeking work in London rather than in the country, we are confident that the result would be advantageous to all parties.

We recommend—

(a) That the County Council be recommended to suggest to the Board of Trade that steps should be taken for making the official labour returns more generally known throughout the country.

(b) That the County Council be recommended to call the attention of the various societies and others interested in the employment of discharged soldiers to the existing state of the London labour market.

Alien immigration.

8.—The conference had before it the following resolution of the Hackney Board of Guardians—

That in the opinion of this board the unrestricted system of alien immigration now permitted is largely responsible for the present congestion of the labour market, and the guardians therefore suggest that the conference convened by the London County Council should urge upon the Imperial Government the necessity of at once enacting restrictive legislation dealing with this matter.

On this subject the following motion was proposed by Mr. C. H. Dewey (Wandsworth Borough Council)—

That this conference of representatives from the administrative authorities of London assembled to consider the question of unemployed labour, desires to direct the attention of His Majesty's Government to the ever-increasing number of undesirable aliens landing in this country, thereby constituting a serious difficulty in dealing with the unemployed labour question, and that it is the sense of this meeting that Parliament should pass a Bill to restrict the immigration of the undesirable unemployed from other countries.

That a copy of this resolution be respectfully submitted to the Members of His Majesty's Government.

As is well known, a Royal Commission is at the present time sitting to consider the question of alien immigration, and, while it does not therefore appear to be expedient to express any definite opinions on this subject pending the report of the Royal Commission, it may be safely asserted that if aliens are allowed to immigrate into London they should be compelled to observe all those sanitary laws which are insisted upon in the case of Londoners generally. In other words, immigration into London should not, as it is at present, be made more easy, and London therefore made attractive for undesirable aliens by any relaxation in the administration of the sanitary laws and regulations.

It has been suggested in the preceding paragraph that steps should be taken in the direction of obviating excessive immigration from the country. But if action in this direction is desirable in consequence of the existing state of the labour market, similar action must be still more desirable in the case of immigration from foreign countries.

In this connection the following paragraph [234] of the report of the Royal Commission on Labour may be quoted—

"It has often been suggested of late years that the immigration of destitute aliens should be prohibited altogether. Mr. Charles Booth, however, expressed the opinion that such a measure would not do very much towards relieving the pressure of competition in the 'sweated' trades generally, and that the best hope of dealing, by any definite action, with the problem that these trades present, lay in applying increased pressure of administrative sanitary requirements to the owners and occupiers of the places where they are

“carried on in such a way as either gradually to transform their character or else slowly to squeeze them out of existence with as little hardship as possible to those who are engaged in them.”

We recommend—

That the County Council be recommended to forward a copy of the report of the conference to the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration and to invite the attention of the Commission to the foregoing paragraph.

Expediting public works.

9.—The following resolution was suggested by the Poplar Board of Guardians—

That in view of the exceptional slackness of demand for labour, public authorities are urged to push on with all expedition work for which provision has already been made, more particularly work like the building of houses, which will employ different classes of skilled labour, and that they be recommended to do this with as little publicity as possible, so as not to attract numbers of the unemployed from the country; and, further, that they be recommended to limit employment on these works to local men so far as is possible.

This is a matter to which the attention of the various authorities may be invited, and probably many have already taken action in the direction suggested. It may be mentioned, as an illustration, that, although no report was purposely made on the matter, at the commencement of the present winter the chairman of the London County Council arranged that wherever possible works which were required in connection with the Council's operations should be pushed forward, and various works in connection with the main drainage, parks, fire stations, etc., have been expedited in this way.

We recommend—

That the County Council be asked to invite the attention of the local authorities to this paragraph.

Training of surplus town population in the needs and ways of country life—Migration and emigration.

10.—The following resolution was suggested by the Poplar Board of Guardians—

That boards of guardians be urged to adopt a policy by which families who are failing to maintain themselves in towns may, by training in the needs and ways of country life, be drafted back to independence on the land, and the authorities represented at this conference be urged to co-operate with the guardians and other public authorities interested to that end.

It appears most desirable that every opportunity should be taken by the educational and municipal authorities to provide such practical and industrial training as will fit the workers for efficient labour. Efforts in this direction are already made in the case of emigrants to the colonies, but it does not seem altogether reasonable that special efforts should be made which would have the effect of providing the colonies with specially trained labour, if no efforts in this direction are made on behalf of the home country. It is not suggested that training for colonial life should *not* be provided, but merely that the needs of the United Kingdom should be equally borne in mind and dealt with by the county and borough councils, by the technical education authorities and by the agricultural schools and colleges.

One aspect of the question of emigration needs to be borne in mind, viz., the undesirability of facilitating the emigration of the best workers from the home country, for of course the less capable workers would be unfitted to make their way in the colonies. This matter was referred to in the Report of the Royal Commission on Labour, in the following terms (paragraph 236)—

“Emigration may be a remedy in certain cases, but one serious objection to it from the present point of view, is that the shiftless and incapable are not fit to emigrate, and if the emigrants are to be drawn from a better class, this is in effect to remove the more capable in order to lighten the pressure of competition on the less capable.”

With regard to emigration, however, it would appear that if such a method of relieving industrial depression is desirable, steps should be taken for supplying good and reliable information, not only in the shape of definite replies to emigration requirements, but also in the shape of lectures, by persons holding responsible positions, on our colonies and dependencies in overcrowded districts where emigration would be a useful adjunct to the means of providing work for the unemployed, and where the people have no means of knowing anything whatever of the countries and districts beyond their immediate living-places.

In connection with the question of emigration, we might add that it is believed by many that the practice of granting reserve pay to ex-soldiers whilst in this country might be extended to all reservists who go to any of the Colonies. There can be no danger in this if the high percentage of the reservists returning to the Colonies during the recent war, viz., 97 per cent., is maintained, and the discouragement to emigration which results from the existing regulations would be removed.

Finally, with regard to emigration, we think that the case of women emigrants should receive special attention, and we have alluded to this point below (page 16).

We recommend—

That the County Council be asked to forward a copy of this paragraph to the various educational and other authorities in London concerned in the matter.

The question of conferring power upon boards of guardians to take land for the purpose of providing work in times of want.

11.—The Camberwell Board of Guardians have expressed the opinion that among the matters which should be considered at the conference is the question of the modification of the poor laws, so as to enable boards of guardians, either individually or conjointly, to take land for the purpose of finding work for the unemployed in times of want.

Under Acts passed in the reigns of George III. and William IV., the guardians appear to have power, under the control and subject to the rules, orders and regulations of the Local Government Board, to purchase or rent land, not exceeding 50 acres for any parish, for setting destitute able-bodied

persons to work, and to pay such persons reasonable wages for their labours. Any such land must, however, be either within or near to the parish the guardians of which acquire it. Moreover, any wages so paid would be parochial relief, and would involve the same disfranchisement as other poor law relief. It may be mentioned that the circular, issued in August, 1886, by Mr. Chamberlain, when President of the Local Government Board, stated that the Board would be glad to assist the guardians by authorising the hiring of land for the purpose of "spade husbandry," which it was then suggested should be adopted as a labour test (see page 38 below).

It will be seen that the powers of the guardians in the matter are very circumscribed, and we would repeat, what has been stated above, that it is important to remember that work provided by the guardians is only given as poor law relief.

To suggest that the guardians should be given a discretionary power to afford relief which should not entail pauperisation would be to raise a question surrounded by most serious difficulties. On the other hand if there could be co-operation between the guardians and the local authorities in order that the pauperisation of those persons whose difficulties are occasioned only by exceptional circumstances arising from temporary scarcity of employment might as far as practicable be avoided, as suggested by the Local Government Board in 1892 (see page 38), there can be no doubt that benefit would result to all parties. We therefore recommend—

That the County Council be asked to ascertain the views of the borough councils and the boards of guardians on the suggestions contained in the foregoing paragraph.

Equalisation of rates.

12.—The Camberwell Board of Guardians also suggest that the conference should consider the question of the equalisation of rates. This does not appear to help the matter except in the most indirect manner, and as it involves so many other important considerations which cannot be dealt with in this report it is deemed inadvisable to enter upon the question on the present occasion.

The establishment of registers of workmen out of work and the distinction between the temporarily and chronically unemployed.

13.—The following resolution was suggested by the Poplar Board of Guardians—

That as it is desirable in time of unusual distress that the temporarily unemployed should be classified apart from the chronically unemployed and the casually employed, borough councils are urged to open a register, in which shall be entered the names, addresses, trade, last employment and its duration, of workmen out of work.

This subject is largely connected with that of the establishment of labour bureaux, which has been dealt with above (see page 19).

On the question of discriminating between deserving and other recipients of parochial relief, the following extract from the report of the Select Committee in 1896 (page xv.) is of interest—

"Your Committee recognise the practical difficulties connected with this question, but they do not regard them as insurmountable, and with a view of carrying out the recommendation of the Committee of 1895, they recommend that a person should not be disfranchised unless he has received relief for a period exceeding one month during the qualifying year, and has also received relief at some period during the year immediately preceding the qualifying year."

We recommend—

That the Conference do endorse the foregoing recommendation of the Select Committee on Distress from Want of Employment with regard to the disfranchisement following the receipt of poor law relief, and that the County Council be asked to convey to the Local Government Board an expression of the opinion of the Conference on the matter.

The appointment of a representative standing committee.

14.—The Stepney Board of Guardians suggest that a representative standing committee should be appointed, which should be empowered to deal with the unemployed on a sound and definite basis.

While it is no doubt desirable that in times of exceptional distress there should be co-operation between the local authorities, the guardians, the voluntary associations formed for the purpose of affording relief and the various trade societies, it does not appear to be altogether expedient to appoint one standing committee which would probably have the effect of lessening the efforts of the various authorities which it has been suggested above should be made in the direction of arranging for many of the ordinary public works to be carried out in the "slack" times. Moreover, the constitution of such a committee, its powers and the source from which its funds should be drawn would, no doubt, prove questions of considerable difficulty upon which it would not be expedient to enter.

The suggestion of the Stepney Guardians is, however, met by the recommendation in paragraph 23 below.

The question of calling a National Conference.

15.—This question arises under the following resolution, suggested by the Poplar Borough Council—

That the County Council be asked to call a national conference of municipal, county and poor law authorities in order to secure these regulations a wider discussion and publicity, and to secure some uniform national policy regarding the treatment of exceptional distress.

It appears to us most probable that the machinery thus proposed to be called into operation would not be of practical use except to emphasise the general desire for some steps to be taken, and this is scarcely needed. We think, however, that the result of the present Conference might usefully be communicated to the various authorities throughout the country, and we therefore recommend—

That in the opinion of the Conference it is inexpedient at the present time to call a national conference on the subject of the unemployed, but that the County Council be requested to forward copies of the report of the Conference to the county, municipal and poor law authorities throughout the country, and to invite their observations thereon.

The question of the appointment of a Minister of Industry.

16.—The Poplar Borough Council and Guardians suggest the desirability of considering as to whether the Government should be approached on the subject of appointing a Minister of Industry.

As will be seen from the various statements made above, action has, in the past, been taken by the Local Government Board in the matter of the unemployed. The labour department of the Board of Trade at the present time collect and publish most valuable information on matters connected with the industrial population, and again the Board of Agriculture have also published information which bears upon the subject. It appears desirable that at any rate the question of concentrating the powers and duties of these various departments should be considered, and in particular that all publications on the subject should be issued from one department, and in such a shape and under such circumstances as will make them well known to all concerned.

As a matter of fact, however, the question has recently been before Parliament, and on 3rd March, 1903, Mr. Hault proposed the following resolution—

That the constitution of the Board of Trade has become obsolete, and this House is of opinion that a department, presided over by a Minister of Commerce and Industry, having the status of a principal Secretary of State, should be substituted for the present office, to which should be entrusted all matters more particularly appertaining to commerce and industry, and to that end that an inquiry should be forthwith instituted with the view of rearranging the duties and functions of existing departments.

Sir Charles Dilke moved the following amendment—

That, with a view to administrative efficiency, this House calls on His Majesty's Government to undertake a redistribution of duties between the various Government departments concerned, with due regard to the interests of labour.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer undertook that an inquiry should be instituted, both into the position of the departments in question and into the distribution of their work, and the amendment and the motion were thereupon withdrawn.

We recommend—

That in connection with the promised inquiry into the duties of the Board of Trade and other government departments, the County Council be requested to forward a copy of the report of the Conference to H.M. Government.

Deputation to His Majesty's Government.

17.—The Poplar Borough Council and Guardians suggest that a deputation should be appointed to lay the decision of the Conference before the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the President of the Board of Trade and the President of the Local Government Board.

It is suggested that this proposition might be met if copies of the report of the Conference, when finally settled, were sent to the Prime Minister and the Government departments referred to.

Reduction of hours of labour.

18.—If it is a fact that there does not exist sufficient work in the country to afford employment for the whole population, that circumstance alone appears to warrant a consideration as to whether the reduction of the hours of labour to a reasonable limit, in the interests of industry and labour alike, is not a matter of the highest importance.

As an illustration of the effect of reducing to within reasonable limits the hours of labour in one particular branch of work, may be mentioned the action taken by the County Council with regard to the employees engaged in connection with the tramways undertaking transferred to its control in 1898. When the tramways were taken over by the Council the employees worked on an average 11½ hours a day, equivalent to 67½ hours a week, and moreover there were no compulsory rest days, except in the case of drivers and conductors, who had one day's rest in eleven, but received no pay in respect of that day. The Council in 1899 and 1900 introduced a system whereby all classes of the tramway employees worked only six days in seven, and further the hours of labour were reduced to an average of 10 a day, equivalent to 60 hours a week. These changes necessitated an increase in the staff of about 426, representing an increase of 19 per cent. Since 1900, the undertakings of two other companies have been acquired by the Council. The companies employed 355 men, and to place these on the Council's conditions involved the employment of 74 extra men—an increase of 20 per cent.

The application of this process of reduction of hours, where practicable, and the absorption into each overworked trade of its own surplus unemployed, is the easiest method of providing work for the unemployed. This process has to a certain extent been in operation for the past few years, as will appear from the figures quoted in the Board of Trade's labour statistics, which show that from 1894 to 1901, 354,859 workers obtained a reduction of their hours of labour, amounting on an average to about four hours per week each.

Wages of unskilled workers.

19.—Reference is made in the concluding paragraph of this report to the importance of efforts being made on the part of the workers themselves to meet times of slackness in trade which are certain to arise. But the wages which many of these earn at the best of times are probably so low as to render it impossible for them to do more than provide the necessaries for their daily existence, and it is not so much want of work which affects the ordinary labourer out of employ as it is want of sufficient money when fully employed to lay by for periods when work is not forthcoming. That the conditions under which many of the working classes live is a matter of serious moment to the community is well shown by the following extracts from official publications, viz.—

“ It will be seen that the food supply of our poorer working classes compares unfavourably . . . with the diets of the inmates of poorhouses, prisons and pauper lunatic

"asylums. . . . This is not the place to consider the question of how far it is right that the diets of prisons and poorhouses should be better than that of the free labouring classes, but it is certainly a matter of regret that the free labourer fails to secure so good a diet as the inmates of a prison or a poorhouse." [A Study of the Diet of the Labouring Classes in Edinburgh by Dr. Noël Paton, Dr. Crauford Dunlop and Dr. Elsie Maud Inglis, carried out under the auspices of the Town Council of the City of Edinburgh, page 82.]

"The one subject which causes anxiety in the future as regards recruiting is the gradual deterioration of the physique of the working classes, from whom the bulk of the recruits must always be drawn. When it is remembered that recruiters are instructed not to submit for medical examination candidates for enlistment unless they are reasonably expected to be passed as fit, one cannot but be struck by the percentage considered by the medical officers as unfit for the service. In the reports from all the manufacturing districts stress is invariably laid upon the number of men medically rejected for bad teeth, flat feet and inferior physique."—(Annual report of the Inspector-General of Recruiting, for the year 1902, para. 150.)

The rise in the Prison Population of Scotland between 1897 and 1901 "was due to greatly increased numbers of casual irregular workers, who, owing to the comparative scarcity of labourers, had more employment than usual, and had, accordingly, more money to spend on drink." . . . "From the nature of the offences and the occupation of those who have so largely increased their number, we can come to no better explanation of the extraordinary rise of the imprisonments last year than that it was caused by the disorderly conduct of the lowest class, who, through an abundance of employment on public works, were placed in possession of wages which they did not wisely expend."—(Annual Report of the Prison Commissioners for Scotland for the year 1901, page 7).

The lesson from this is that casual occupation with its alternating excesses and enforced privations deteriorate the moral and undoubtedly the physical and industrial capacity of labourers, and this was evidenced by the large proportion of unemployable in the "unemployed processions."

The remedy for this state of things is to be looked for in the direction of a rise in wages and increased regularity of employment, and it is to be hoped that the spread of education and the resulting increased productiveness of the work of the industrial population generally will soon bear fruit in the manner indicated. It is of the utmost importance that this far-reaching result of education should be as thoroughly realised by the working classes themselves as it now appears to be by the authorities responsible for providing opportunities for education, and a word of warning should be given to the workers that in this direction the remedy for their poverty now rests, in the long run, largely with themselves. If the law protected them from enforced labour beyond reasonable limits, provided them with a reasonable minimum wage when at work, and educated them to take their respective places in the labour market, it must be their duty, in return, to provide against contingencies, and probably the money now spent upon gambling and excessive drinking would go far to meet all requirements.

Period during which the militia are embodied for annual training.

20.—The question of the period of the militia training appears to be one which to a considerable extent bears upon the subject now under discussion. At the present time it is the practice for the militia to be embodied during those months of the year in which private enterprise is probably most active, and during which, therefore, the services of the workers are most in demand. If it should prove practicable to alter the period of training to the slack months, say from November to April, it appears probable that benefit would result to all parties concerned, for, in the first place, there would be less disinclination on the part of employers to allow their men to join the militia, as they would not be taken away when they would be most wanted, as is at present the case, and, in the second place, it would prove of practical advantage to the men themselves, inasmuch as it would help them to get over those parts of the year in which they experience the greatest difficulty. It appears reasonable to suggest that the War Office should be asked to consider this question, and we therefore recommend—

That the County Council be recommended to ask the War Office to consider the practicability of altering the period of the year during which the Militia are embodied for training.

Lack of employment among women.

21.—This question has to be considered from the point of view of two different classes of persons, viz.—

(i.) Women who are thrown out of employment through causes similar to those which operate in the case of men.

(ii.) Women who, owing to a variety of causes, are compelled to seek employment at a more or less late period of their lives, and frequently without any proper training.

A further element of difficulty in connection with the employment of women is that in many cases, although they are, or seek to be, engaged in one employment or another, they are not wholly dependent upon their own earnings.

As it is quite impossible to give a general answer to so complex a question as that now under consideration, it is assumed for the present purpose that women may be roughly classified into three groups, viz., (a) professional, (b) commercial, (c) industrial workers. With regard to these, information has been obtained from the following sources, viz.—

- Miss Spencer, Secretary Central Employment Bureau.
- Miss King, Secretary for Promoting Employment of Women.
- Madame Gay, Secretary Continental Department, Y.W.C.A.
- Miss Ward, Secretary Business Girls' Registry, Y.W.C.A.

Miss Gough, Secretary Domestic and Educational Registry, Y.W.C.A.
 Miss Tuckwell, Hon. Secretary Women's Trades Union League.
 Miss Papworth, the Secretary Women's Industrial Council.
 Mr. Price, of the Charity Organisation Society.

Professional workers.

Chances of employment.—All offices report that speaking generally the supply of workers is greater than the demand. But there are certain exceptions, the most important of which are in the classes of—

- (1) Lady nurses and lady cooks.
- (2) Laundry matrons and organisers.
- (3) Highly trained workers, technical and secretarial.
- (4) Skilled handicraft women.

The proportion of workers sent away without situations is variously stated as two-thirds and three-quarters by two of the secretaries of the Y.W.C.A. More definite information on this point is given by the Report of the Central Bureau. Apparently out of 1,147 on the books and registered in 1902, 550 were suited by the bureau and other agencies, but there were in addition 1905 applications which were not registered, of which only 82 were helped to work, the totals thus being—3,052 applications; 632 situations found.

Reasons for failure to find work—

- (a) Lack of training arising from various causes.
- (b) The age limit (40), which is almost universally recognised, bars out all women above that age. This is double-edged. It prevents women from taking up new employments and it ousts them from their old ones. This is especially the case with teachers, and explains the severe competition for posts as companions, housekeepers, etc.
- (c) A general lack of adaptability on the part of applicants, ignorance as to the requirements of the labour market, as to the branches of work in which demand for workers exceeds the supply as to methods of training; also inability to recognise the need of apprenticeship.
- (d) Delicacy of health and effects of overstrain, which debar many applicants from undertaking regular and moderately arduous employment. [N.B.—This is not conceded by all informants.]
- (e) In connection specially with governesses, displacement is caused by modern changes in the educational ideal, which is now realised by public schools rather than by private tuition. The excessive supply of foreign governesses is attributed to the extension of education abroad to the very poorest.

Suggestions—

- (a) Better technical training based on a good general education. It was emphasised that technical classes were insufficient, and that virtual apprenticeship must in most cases precede efficiency.
- (b) The development of new employments and a scientific distribution of workers in the older branches of work.
- (c) Adequate insurance for the benefit of the girls of a family, who are frequently called upon to render unpaid indefinite and *terminable* services involved in the relationships of daughter and sister. Thus a woman who up to 40 has kept a brother's house or tended her old parents cannot then enter the labour market on equal terms with younger and highly trained women, and she should, therefore, be protected by means of insurance from the hardships which would result from the withdrawal of her means of support.
- (d) Emigration, but under proper supervision and with previous preparation.

Commercial (and Domestic) works.

Chances of employment—For the whole year there was a fairly even balance as far as dressmakers and milliners were concerned, but there is a great deal of seasonal pressure. Long holidays, six to nine weeks are the rule. Even skilled workers find great difficulty in getting work out of the season. At the other end of the scale there is a distinct shortage of girl apprentices and improvers, which is increasing year by year, and is attributed to the immediate returns offered by factory work.

Of immature typists there is at all times an excessive supply. Shops appear to find their own employees without the help of registry offices, hence no information has been obtained for this class. Domestic servants are in great demand and also nursery governesses.

Suggestions—The shortage of apprentices in dressmaking, etc., might perhaps be met by improved relations between employers and employed, by a reduction of the present working hours, and if it were possible by a more regular distribution of work throughout the year.

The Maison Esperance is trying to meet the seasonal difficulty by giving exceptionally favourable terms to ladies who will give their orders during the slack season. Also all overtime should be paid. This is usual, but not universal.

As regards the remaining two classes, the diversion of girls into handicraft pursuits and social recognition of the dignity of domestic service are highly desirable.

Industrial workers.

As regards this section practically no statistics are available. It is suggested that enquiries might be addressed to the labour department of the Board of Trade on the subject.

The effect of shortage of work on women is very different to that produced on men. The woman takes anything at any price, with results in the long run as disastrous as actual cessation of work. It means slow starvation and no official returns. Also for the younger women and girls there is always the alternative of domestic service. Their work in factories is largely of the supple-

mentary kind, and, in perhaps the majority of cases they do not earn enough for their maintenance; hence even if they do not enter service they have their homes to fall back upon. The whole question is bound up with that of the excessive centralisation of work in London, and many other problems. That it is a point on which public interest is being aroused, is apparent from the fact that the newspapers have approached such bodies as the Women's Industrial Council, with a view to obtaining information and statistics.

We suggest in paragraph 23 that the need exists for some elaboration of the official organisation in order that the industrial conditions of the country may be more accurately ascertained by those to whom such knowledge would be of the greatest use. The difficulty of obtaining statistics with regard to the industrial workers among women emphasises the importance of steps being taken in this direction, and we trust that in the consideration of this question the case of women workers will receive special attention.

Our attention has been called to the fact that the statistics relating to women workers, which formerly appeared in the factory inspector's annual report, are no longer included each year in that document. We think this is a matter for regret, and are of opinion that their re-introduction would serve a useful purpose.

In connection with the lack of employment amongst women there is one other question which we think should be considered, viz., the present condition of things brought about by the modern extension of the system of home work. In the earlier days this was of course a common practice, and the hand loom was in use in very many families with probably no serious evils arising therefrom. At the present time, however, with the existence of large and densely populated towns and overcrowded dwellings, the conditions are altogether different, and it appears to us that it is very desirable that some steps should be taken for the proper regulation of this class of work, which principally affects women workers. This not only would appear to be advisable from the point of view of the workers themselves, but also in the interests of the consumers of the commodities produced—principally clothing. We would therefore suggest that some steps should be taken for the registration and periodical inspection of all houses in which work of this nature is carried out.

Employment of children.

22.—We think that one of the many reasons which have in the past helped to swell the ranks of the unemployed is to be found in the fact that in hundreds of cases children have been taken from school when their education has been very incomplete, and have been drafted into the lowest ranks of unskilled labour. They have received no technical training of any description, and the little education which has been imparted to them has left no desire to take efficient steps to improve their position, and they have too frequently been content to remain in the ranks of the casual worker.

Moreover, every year thousands of boys and girls of fourteen years of age leave school, utterly unequipped for the conduct of life. If the age of compulsory education—in evening schools at least—were raised to sixteen, and the interval employed in social, industrial and physical training, the hooligan would rapidly tend to disappear, and with him many of the unemployable. The economic loss to the nation would be compensated for by the increased efficiency of the whole industrial army. Nor would it be unreasonable to ask that before leaving day school every pupil in our elementary schools should be carefully examined to ascertain how far he or she is capable of exercising a citizen's duties. At present, hosts of children leave school equally unequipped for the conduct of their own lives and for membership of civilised society. After medical observation many of these should surely be certified as defective, and detained by the State on probation in a state of tutelage. This matter is, we believe, already before the London County Council, the Metropolitan Asylums Board and the London School Board.

Our attention has been drawn to the Employment of Children Bill, recently introduced into the House of Commons by the Home Secretary, by which power is proposed to be conferred upon the council of any county or municipal borough to make by-laws regulating the employment of children and restricting the hours of such employment.

With regard to the question of age limit, the bill proposes that such by-laws shall not apply to any child above 12 employed in pursuance of (*inter alia*) the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, or who, in pursuance of the Education Acts, 1870 to 1902, is wholly exempted from the obligation to attend school. Power is also sought to enable by-laws to be made for regulating street trading by persons under the age of 16, with the restriction that no child under the age of eleven years shall be employed in street trade.

On 17th March, 1903, a conference of the London local and other authorities was held at the offices of the School Board for London and the following resolutions amongst others were passed—

- (1.) That throughout the country there should be a uniform statutory minimum age fixed by law, and under no circumstances should a child under that age be permitted to engage in labour.
- (2.) That this age should be fixed at twelve years.
- (3.) That the maximum age for the licensing of children for street labour should be 16.
- (4.) That under no circumstances should any girl be licensed for street trading who has not reached 14 years of age.
- (5.) That no child, not exempt from the obligation to attend school, should under any circumstances work more than 25 hours per week.
- (6.) That "half-timers" should not be licensed for street trading under any circumstances.

It appears to us that legislation in the direction above indicated will do much to remove the evil to which we have briefly alluded in this paragraph, and we therefore recommend—

That the conference do record its opinion that legislation with the object of preventing the employment of children below the age of 12 years is eminently desirable, and that the County Council be asked to forward the finding of the conference on this subject to the Home Secretary.

Desirability of the establishment of a more complete industrial organisation throughout the country.

23.—It seems that, in order to deal with the question of the unemployed on a sound and permanent basis, it is necessary that there should be some organisation by which the state of the labour market could be accurately ascertained from time to time. The Labour Department of the Board of Trade at the present time collects much valuable information with reference to the industrial conditions of the country, and the results are summarised in the official monthly publication, the *Labour Gazette*. But it would appear that much remains to be done in the direction of the dissemination of this and other information of the utmost importance to the workers. It is therefore suggested that for this purpose there should be a properly organised system of industrial offices spread about the country in touch with one another, and the result of their operations consolidated by a common reference to a superior office. These offices should not only exercise the functions of the ordinary labour bureau, but, what is more important, should also act as agencies for the collection of authentic information on the existing industrial conditions.

For this purpose it is suggested that there should be

- (1.) A local industrial office for each town or borough (the town or borough council).
- (2.) A central office for each group of towns or boroughs (in London the County Council, in other centres of industry a joint committee, consisting of representatives from the various towns interested).
- (3.) A central office for the whole of the United Kingdom (the Labour Department, Board of Trade).
- (4.) To the central offices might be sent reports from colonial and foreign towns.

The offices under heads (1) and (2) might be under the management of a committee of the county or borough council, on which representatives of employers, workers and other persons interested might serve under a scheme to be drawn up by the county or borough councils. The various societies of the organised trades would forward monthly statements and reports to the local offices, and statistics with regard to unorganised trades and unskilled labour would be provided by means of the labour bureaux. By this method accurate statistics would be at the disposal of the local authority, who would thereby be placed in a position to properly and practically consider what steps it was advisable to take under the conditions thus found to exist.

Such an organisation would, by the proposed reference to a common or superior office, enable reliable information to be obtained as to any exceptional conditions arising in the industrial world, and would enable the various localities to make representations to the central office, which would be responsible for the industrial interests of the nation as a whole. It is thought that if the whole of the industrial conditions of the kingdom could by such a system as that above indicated be brought under the survey of local offices, and ultimately of the central office, earlier warnings of the progress of events could be brought before the workers concerned than is possible without any such organisation.

Moreover, if such an organisation were established, it would be possible at any moment to obtain definite and exact information as to the extent, if any, to which the whole country was overpopulated, and the central office should have the power of formulating schemes for the consideration of governments concerned for the establishment of, possibly, farming and other industries abroad. If the central office were of opinion that the population of the home country was becoming congested, then it would take the earliest opportunity of preparing the way for the emigration to the colonies under proper conditions of such portions of the population as might be desirable. For this purpose, industrial training schools or classes would be essential. Any expenditure on these schools or classes and other expenses connected with the establishment of such an undertaking would no doubt be fully repaid by the demands for the products of the home country which would arise from the activities of the colony abroad.

On the question suggested by the heading of this paragraph the following extract from the report of the Select Committee of 1896 [page v.] should be quoted—

- “ Having regard to the great difficulty which has been experienced in ascertaining the numbers of the unemployed, and to the very divergent estimates which were put forward, your committee are of opinion that some provision should be made for the more accurate ascertainment locally of the numbers of unemployed, and for the furnishing to the Local Government Board of periodical returns of such numbers.
- “ In the opinion of your committee the labour correspondents of the Board of Trade might be utilised for this purpose, acting in concert with the local poor law and other authorities and the local charitable associations, local trades unions, friendly societies, and labour registries.”

The interests of the community are so wrapped up in the efficiency of the working classes, that it can only be reasonable that the respective authorities representing it, to whom is already entrusted the corporate interests of the people in the direction of education, public health, etc., and who are called upon to pay for the support of the wreckage resulting from the existing social system, should endeavour to take steps for rendering such assistance to the workers as will prevent a condition of things under which the present wreckage results. By assistance is *not* meant a system of charitable doles, but rather the dissemination of such information as will enable the working classes to realise what steps they should themselves take to improve their position, the provision of training classes and lectures on social problems as well as other technical education, and the enabling of a comprehensive view of the industrial conditions of the whole country to be taken by the central authority so that really efficient steps may be taken to remove any evil which may be shown to exist. Again, by assistance is *not* meant the provision of useless works, but rather the institution of such methods as will in the long run prevent the necessity for such works being undertaken.

Under such an organisation as that which we have briefly outlined, each locality would deal with its own industrial problems, and the central authority would act as the industrial exchange of the

country by being informed of the surplus of the supply of labour over the demand, or the reverse, which existed in each local centre.

It may be confidently asserted that even if the elaboration of the official industrial organisation of the country necessitated fresh public expenditure, much of the money now spent in poor law relief would probably be saved, and not only would the money be saved, but all the evils caused by the degradation of accepting poor law relief would be avoided.

We recommend—

That the County Council be recommended to consider the question of the establishment of a more complete industrial organisation as suggested, and that for that purpose it be requested to consider—

- (i.) As to whether any additional statutory powers are necessary to enable such an organisation to be established in London, and, if any further powers are needed, the best means of obtaining them.
- (ii.) As to the desirability of the Government being asked to take steps for the establishment of such an organisation throughout the country.

Economical difficulties of the poor.

24.—During the consideration of the problem of the unemployed, we have been confronted with some of the economical difficulties with which the poor have always to contend. We refer, for instance, to such questions as the heavy cost of coal owing to purchase in small quantities, the hardships of the existing system of pawnbroking in England, and the difficulties of securing properly cooked food. It is not for us to enter into a discussion of these questions, but we desire to submit to the conference the following recommendation—

That the County Council be recommended to appoint a Special Committee to inquire into the economical difficulties of the poor.

Summary and conclusion.

25.—To sum up, want of employment depends upon two main causes—fluctuations of trade and fluctuations of individual character. The former lie for the most part beyond the control of society as at present constituted. Some of the compensatory arrangements that may be made by public or private employers have been sketched in section 6. But the chief means of meeting them must lie in the power of the workers themselves to provide against seasonal and cyclical disturbances of industry by means of trades unionism, co-operation, and other means for increasing wages, and the encouragement of thrift. Where these fail on an extensive scale "exceptional distress" may be said to exist. If the organisation sketched in section 23 were efficiently at work, such a condition of things would be foreseen by the Central Labour Department, upon whose advice as to the probable permanence of the decline, local action would largely depend. If the distress were temporary and acute, relief works, carefully planned beforehand, to meet the special needs of the trade or locality, might be undertaken under the safeguards suggested in section 6. If the decline were likely to be permanent in a trade or district, relief works would be useless. Such a situation would make large demands on the judgment, ingenuity and resource, not only of the central authority but of the local authorities and other local bodies. It could not in any case be adequately met without the co-operation of several of the agencies mentioned in section 4.

The would-be workers, whose lack of employment results from irregularity or decline of trade, are comparatively easy to deal with. The chief difficulty arises in connection with those who are unemployed owing to irregularity or decline, not of trade, but of personal character. They are the unemployable, and this initial question confronts us in their case as in that of the class we have just dealt with. Is it a permanent decline, or may it be regarded as temporary and conditional? In other words, is there a hopeless lack of character, or can character be restored? Initially, again, the first rough ascertainment of this class must belong to the organisation sketched in section 23. When ascertained, this class, divided into apparently hopeless and possibly hopeful cases, needs to be dealt with by two entirely different sets of agencies—the hopeless by means of the poor law and asylums boards, the hopeful by personal friendship, religious influences, co-operative charity, and labour training. There is no doubt that much that passes as missionary or charitable enterprise, so far from removing, tends rather to perpetuate and reinforce, the unemployable class. A board of charities, with powers analogous in some respects to those of the Board of Trade and the Local Government Board, might do much to clear the way for the right treatment of the unemployable as of many other classes of persons in distress.

In considering a question of the nature of that relating to the unemployed, it must be borne in mind that no action that can be taken can have to any great extent immediate results, and it is of great importance to obviate the necessity of undertaking in a hurry schemes for affording relief by putting the question aside until it becomes acute. On all accounts, therefore, it is highly desirable that the matter should be looked into at once, so that in the event of any further exceptional distress arising, anything like "panic legislation" may be avoided. The matter is probably one which will command the sympathetic attention of all parties, inasmuch as the difficulties with which a large portion of the industrial community has to contend are very great, and it is certain that if anything could be done to afford the workers assistance in the direction which they desire, the community at large will welcome such action.

It is only at times like the present that the subject of the unemployed is generally considered, and then the aid of the local authorities is invoked to meet sudden emergencies. Aid thus demanded and thus given is apt to be not useful, but even pernicious, in the long run, for the subject is one which needs much consideration. It is one of the most serious of public economics, and the effect of any action taken must be far reaching. What, therefore, is needed, is a law which shall constitute the question of the unemployed one of the matters which local authorities

must consider, and under proper restrictions and conditions may take steps to put their conclusions into practice. By this means a continuous and admitted policy would be possible, and there would be no danger of the country or localities suffering from "panic administration." For these and other reasons we would emphasise the desirability of steps being taken in the direction suggested in paragraph 23.

In conclusion we recommend—

- (a) That the County Council be recommended to forward copies of the report of the Conference to—
- (i.) His Majesty's Government.
 - (ii.) The administrative authorities in London.
 - (iii.) The public libraries in London.
 - (iv.) The associations of employers and workmen in London.
 - (v.) The press.
- (b) That the County Council be recommended to invite the other administrative authorities in London to make observations on the report, and on the receipt of such observations to consider as to what steps should be taken thereon.
- (c) That the County Council be recommended to publish and place on sale the report of the Conference.

JOHN BURNS,
Chairman.
C. E. ESCREET,
Vice-Chairman.

Appendix I.

TABLE showing the ratio per 1,000 inhabitants of paupers (excluding lunatics in county and borough asylums, registered hospitals, and licensed houses, vagrants and patients in the fever and small-pox hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylum District) in receipt of relief in London on the last day of each month during the years 1893–1902.

Month.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.
January	23·9	25·0	28·9	24·8	24·7	23·7	23·7	23·2	23·2	24·1
February	23·6	24·4	32·3	24·6	24·0	23·8	23·8	23·2	23·4	24·3
March	21·8	23·2	28·2	23·8	23·3	23·4	23·6	22·7	23·1	23·4
April	21·4	22·4	23·4	22·9	22·5	22·6	22·5	21·9	22·1	22·8
May	21·3	22·2	22·6	22·4	22·1	22·3	22·0	21·4	21·7	22·6
June	21·2	21·8	22·3	22·1	21·9	22·1	21·6	21·2	21·4	22·3
July	21·3	21·6	22·4	21·9	21·8	21·0	21·7	21·4	21·8	22·2
August	21·6	21·9	22·4	22·1	22·1	22·3	21·8	21·4	21·9	22·5
September	22·7	22·1	22·7	22·3	22·4	22·3	22·1	21·6	22·1	22·6
October	23·2	23·1	23·7	23·0	22·8	22·9	22·6	22·2	22·9	23·4
November	24·5	23·7	24·2	23·6	23·3	23·3	22·9	22·8	23·6	24·2
December	24·4	24·0	24·2	23·5	23·5	23·4	23·4	22·9	23·6	24·5
Mean for the year ...	22·6	23·0	24·8	23·1	22·9	22·8	22·6	22·2	22·6	23·2

Appendix II.

TABLE showing total number of paupers in London in receipt of relief (indoor and outdoor) on the last day of each month of the years 1893, 1901 and 1902.

Month.	1893.	1901.	1902.
January	101,866	106,395	109,534
February	100,671	107,472	110,617
March	93,067	106,045	106,476
April	91,373	101,543	103,678
May	90,559	99,481	102,581
June	90,380	98,479	101,242
July	91,787	98,985	101,711
August	92,863	99,309	103,092
September	97,424	100,515	103,442
October	99,885	104,199	107,264
November	105,347	107,237	110,963
December	104,820	107,317	112,209

NOTE.—The corresponding figures for the present year are—January, 114,646; February, 115,641.

Appendix III.

RETURN showing the percentage proportion of members of trade unions unemployed.

Month.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.
	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
January	10.0	7.0	8.2	4.5	3.3	5.0	3.0	2.7	4.0	4.4	5.1
February	9.5	6.3	7.9	3.8	3.0	4.4	2.6	2.9	3.9	4.3	4.8
March	8.7	6.5	6.5	3.5	2.5	3.1	2.5	2.3	3.6	3.7	
April	6.9	6.1	6.5	3.2	2.5	2.9	2.2	2.5	3.8	3.9	
May	6.2	6.3	6.0	3.3	2.3	2.7	2.5	2.4	3.6	4.0	
June	5.8	6.3	5.6	3.2	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.6	3.5	4.2	
July	6.2	7.4	5.3	3.1	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.7	3.4	4.0	
August	7.1	7.7	5.2	3.4	3.5	2.8	2.3	3.0	3.9	4.5	
September	7.3	7.6	4.9	3.6	4.4	2.6	2.4	3.6	3.7	5.0	
October	7.3	7.4	4.9	3.3	4.7	2.5	2.3	3.3	3.7	5.0	
November	7.2	7.0	4.3	2.9	4.8	2.3	2.2	3.2	3.8	4.8	
December	7.9	7.7	4.8	3.2	5.3	2.9	2.5	4.0	4.6	5.5	
Mean for year ...	7.5	6.9	5.8	3.4	3.5	3.0	2.4	2.9	3.8	4.4	

Appendix IV.

TABLE showing the state of employment in London in the following trades—(a) Carpenters and Joiners, (b) Plumbers, and (c) Shipbuilding.

Trade.	No. of members of unions at end of January, 1903.	Percentage returned as unemployed at end of			Increase (+) or decrease (—) in percentage for January, 1903, as compared with a	
		Jan., 1903.	Dec., 1902.	Jan., 1902.	Month ago.	Year ago.
Carpenters and joiners ...	7,235	6.8	6.9	4.4	— 0.1	+ 2.4
Plumbers	1,008	13.3	10.7	7.6	+ 2.6	+ 5.7
Shipbuilding (<i>Thames and Medway</i>)	3,742	10.9	8.7	6.0	+ 2.2	+ 4.9

The following are the percentages of unemployed for February—

Carpenters and joiners ...	...	5.1	...	...	...	...
Plumbers ... ..	...	14.5	...	...	...	...
Shipbuilding (<i>Thames and Medway</i>)	...	4.4	...	...	...	...

Appendix V.

TABLE showing the state of employment of dockers and riverside labourers in London.

Period.	Labourers employed in docks.			Labourers employed at 115 wharves making returns.	Total dock and wharf labourers included in returns.
	By dock companies or through contractors.	By ship-owners, etc.	Total.		
Week ended Jan. 3	5,351	2,151	7,502	5,613	13,115
" " 10... ..	5,175	1,778	6,953	5,673	12,626
" " 17... ..	5,132	1,958	7,090	5,817	12,907
" " 24... ..	5,742	2,104	7,846	5,682	13,528
" " 31... ..	5,396	2,295	7,691	5,526	13,217
Average for 5 weeks ended Jan. 31st, 1903	5,359	2,057	7,416	5,663	13,079
Average for Dec., 1902	6,304	2,336	8,640	6,053	14,693
Average for Jan., 1902	6,911	2,836	9,747	6,506	16,253
The following are the corresponding figures for the average for four weeks ended 28th February, 1903	5,039	1,789	6,828	5,545	12,373

Appendix VI.

TABLE SHOWING the expenditure incurred by the 100 principal trade unions in paying their members unemployed benefit during the 10 years 1892-1901.

Year.	Building.	Mining and quarrying.	Metal, engineering and shipbuilding.	Textile.	Clothing.	Transport.	Other unions.	Total—100 principal unions.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1892	31,729	7,638	187,885	41,635	2,605	6,097	47,606	325,195
1893	40,030	62,435	250,381	44,106	3,544	5,907	54,081	460,484
1894	53,794	26,638	258,620	37,916	4,226	3,272	67,112	451,578
1895	52,345	68,046	190,241	47,997	2,901	3,505	57,392	422,427
1896	25,099	42,896	112,180	33,953	2,400	3,091	46,336	265,955
1897	24,216	24,877	193,791	38,609	1,995	3,357	45,373	332,218
1898	22,249	13,735	103,755	33,763	2,121	17,779	49,389	242,791
1899	24,277	10,247	80,004	26,089	1,379	3,017	45,426	190,439
1900	46,355	4,419	92,131	57,558	1,638	3,612	58,089	263,802
1901	67,228	17,727	132,025	43,606	1,721	3,480	60,079	325,866

Appendix VII.

TABLE showing the expenditure (total and per head of membership) by the 100 principal trades unions for unemployed benefit, the average percentage of unemployed in all trade unions making returns on this point and the total imports and exports (including re-exports) for each of the years 1892-1901.

Year.	Amount of unemployed benefit paid by 100 principal unions.		Proportion of unemployed members.	Total imports and exports (including re-exports).
	Total.	Per member.*		
	£	s. d.	Per cent.	Million £.
1892	325,195	10 2	6·3	715
1893	460,484	13 1	7·5	682
1894	451,578	12 6	6·9	682
1895	422,427	11 2	5·8	703
1896	265,955	7 3	3·4	738
1897	332,218	8 0	3·5	745
1898	242,791	6 1	3·0	764
1899	190,439	4 6	2·4	815
1900	263,802	5 10	2·9	877
1901	325,866	7 3	3·8	870

* Based on the total membership of those of the 100 unions which paid this benefit.

Appendix VIII.

STATEMENT showing action taken by the Metropolitan Borough Councils in the direction of the establishment of Labour Bureaux.

Name of borough council and date of establishment of bureau.	Number of applicants for employment since establishment unless otherwise stated.	Number of applicants who secured work.	Annual cost of maintaining bureau.	Remarks.
Battersea ... [29th Dec., 1892]	1,655 (during year ended 27th Dec., 1902)	439	£50	
Bermondsey ... [3rd Feb., 1903]	2,265	None permanently placed [See last column]	Very slight (for printing, etc.)	Borough council have commenced paving and sewerage works for relief of unemployed, and have given 3 days' work each to 145 men.
Bethnal-green ... [20th Nov., 1902]	970	Do.	...	Do., do.—80 men per week employed as road sweepers
Finsbury ... [2nd March, 1903]	...	...	£160 (estimated)	
Fulham ... [8th Feb., 1903]	417	30	£104	Bureau has been visited by seven or eight employers.
Hackney ... [1894]	997 (since 1st Jan. 1903)	905 men were employed by the borough council, and 4 other applicants obtained work through the bureau	£200	Used by very few private employers.
Hammersmith ... [5th Jan., 1903]	349	52	£91	Ditto.
Holborn ... [1903]	5	...	...	...
Lambeth ... [26th Jan., 1903]	472	...	Trivial	Not used by employers.
Poplar ... [16th Dec., 1902]	5,771	Six by local firms (see last column)	£6 a week	3,707 men have been given temporary work on the roads, not exceeding three days per week in any case. The labour bureaux established by the Poplar Borough Council are only temporary; it is proposed to keep them open until about the middle of April. No applications from other employers.
St. Pancras... [1893-1901, Vestry] [Reopened Dec. '02]	1,043	28	£200	The superintendent of the bureau canvasses employers on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons in order to find situations.
Shoreditch ... [11th Feb., 1903]	743	None permanently placed (see last column)	Cost to date, £25	Borough council has started relief works, and the unemployed are sent to the works in batches of 50, in the order in which they are registered, for 3 days' work at 3s. a day.
Southwark ... [19th Jan., 1903]	1,518	41	...	...
Stepney ... [27th Dec., 1902]	389	*26	...	* Nearly all skilled workmen, and all employed by private employers.
Westminster ... [28th Jan., 1903]	...	...	...	No statistics available.

NOTE.—The late Vestry of *Chelsea* established a labour bureau in October, 1891, but decided to discontinue it March, 1895. 3,755 applicants applied during year ended 31st August, 1893, and 1,618 were employed. The annual cost was £162 2s. 6d.

The *Hampstead and Kensington* Borough Councils have under consideration the question of the establishment of a labour bureau at the present time.

The *Lewisham* Borough Council has established no labour bureau, but it opened a register for the unemployed (162 applicants). A stoneyard was opened and gave 2,648 days' work; the average wage was 1s. 10d. per man per day. A gravel pit gave 891 days' work; wages, 4s. a day.

The town clerk of *St. Marylebone* states that the late vestry made an experiment in the direction of the establishment of a labour bureau, but with unsuccessful results.

The *Wandsworth* District Board established a labour bureau, in 1894, for three months, but out of 200 applicants only one obtained employment. The cost incurred was £20 9s. 6d.

The *Woolwich* Borough Council, although they have not established a labour bureau, have opened a register for the purpose of ascertaining the extent of unemployment in the borough. As the result, 359 have applied, representing 251 unskilled, and 108 skilled workers.

The following borough councils have not established a labour bureau—

Camberwell.
Deptford.
Greenwich.

Islington.
Paddington.

St. Marylebone.
Stoke Newington.

Appendix IX.

The provision of work for the unemployed by municipal and other authorities.

Circular issued by the Local Government Board in November, 1892, to local authorities and boards of guardians in England and Wales—

Local Government Board,
Whitehall, S.W.,
14th November, 1892.

Sir,

From information which the Local Government Board have received, it appears that there is at the present time a considerable amount of distress in different parts of the country occasioned by scarcity of employment, and it is probable that this condition of things may become more general and be intensified in the course of the coming winter.

In the spring of 1886 the Local Government Board issued a circular letter to local authorities indicating the course which might with advantage be adopted for the provision of employment for the unemployed of the class who do not ordinarily seek poor law relief.

The following extracts from that circular appear to me to deserve the immediate and careful consideration of the local authorities, both in the metropolis and elsewhere—

“The Local Government Board are convinced that in the ranks of those who do not ordinarily seek parish relief there is evidence of much and increased privation, and if the depression in trade continues, it is to be feared that large numbers of persons usually in regular employment will be reduced to the greatest straits.

“The spirit of independence which leads so many of the working classes to make great personal sacrifices rather than incur the stigma of pauperism, is one which deserves the greatest sympathy and respect, and which it is the duty and interest of the community to maintain by all the means at its disposal.

“Any relaxation of the general rule at present obtaining, which requires, as a condition of relief to able-bodied male persons, on the ground of their being out of employment, the acceptance of an order for admission to the workhouse, or the performance of an adequate task of work as a labour test, would be most disastrous, as tending directly to restore the condition of things which, before the reform of the poor laws, destroyed the independence of the labouring classes, and increased the poor rate until it became an almost insupportable burden.

“It is not desirable that the working classes should be familiarised with poor law relief, and if once the honourable sentiment which now leads them to avoid it is broken down, it is probable that recourse will be had to this provision on the slightest occasion.

“The Local Government Board have no doubt that the powers which the guardians possess are fully sufficient to enable them to deal with ordinary pauperism, and to meet the demand for relief from the classes who usually seek it.

“What is required in the endeavour to relieve artisans and others who have hitherto avoided poor law assistance, and who are temporarily deprived of employment, is—

“(1.) Work which will not involve the stigma of pauperism ;

“(2.) Work which all can perform, whatever may have been their previous avocations ;

“(3.) Work which does not compete with that of other labourers at present in employment ; and

“Lastly, work which is not likely to interfere with the resumption of regular employment in their own trades by those who seek it.

“The Board have no power to enforce the adoption of any particular proposals, and the object of this circular is to bring the subject generally under the notice of boards of guardians and other local authorities.

“In districts in which exceptional distress prevails, the Board recommend that the guardians should confer with the local authorities, and endeavour to arrange with the latter for the execution of works on which unskilled labour may be immediately employed.

“These works may be of the following kinds, among others—

“(a) Spade husbandry on sewage farms.

“(b) Laying out of open spaces, recreation grounds, new cemeteries, or disused burial grounds.

“(c) Cleansing of streets not usually undertaken by local authorities.

“(d) Laying out and paving of new streets, etc.

“(e) Paving of unpaved streets and making of footpaths in country roads.

“(f) Providing or extending sewerage works and works of water supply.

“In all cases in which special works are undertaken to meet exceptional distress, it would appear to be necessary first that the men employed should be engaged on the recommendation of the guardians as persons whom, owing to previous condition and circumstances, it is undesirable to send to the workhouse or to treat as subjects for pauper relief ; and second, that the wages paid should be something less than the wages ordinarily paid for similar work, in order to prevent imposture, and to leave the strongest temptation to those who avail themselves of this opportunity to return as soon as possible to their previous occupations.

“When the works are of such a character that the expense may properly be defrayed out of borrowed moneys, the local authorities may rely that there will be every desire on the part of the Board to deal promptly with the application for their sanction to a loan.”

I would urge on the local authorities, on whom devolves the duty of carrying out the works required for their districts, that the execution of such works should, whenever practicable, be commenced at an early date, so that employment may be given during the winter months when work is the more needed, rather than later in the coming year.

I would at the same time emphasize the great importance which I attach to the co-operation of boards of guardians with local authorities, in order that the pauperisation of those persons whose difficulties are occasioned only by exceptional circumstances arising from temporary scarcity of employment, and who are unwilling to become dependent on poor law relief, may, as far as practicable, be avoided.

In the case of the metropolis some of the classes of employment suggested above are not practicable; but, apart from the execution of new works, it will probably be found that in the performance of the ordinary routine duties of the sanitary authority occasions will arise when surplus labour may be profitably utilised.

I shall be obliged if this letter is brought under the consideration of the authority at once, and it will be satisfactory to me to be kept informed of the state of affairs in your district, and to learn the results of any efforts which may be made in the direction suggested.

I am, Sir,

The Clerk to the Guardians or
Sanitary Authority.

Your obedient Servant,
(Signed) HENRY H. FOWLER.

Appendix X.

Extract from the Report of the Board of Trade on the Unemployed, 1893.

MUNICIPAL RELIEF WORKS.

TABLE showing action taken by local authorities in London in providing work during the winter of 1892-3, for the purpose of relieving the Unemployed.

Name of local authorities.	Class of work provided.	Daily average number of men employed.	Remarks.
Paddington Vestry ...	Painting water-van ...	5	Register kept, and employment given when men are wanted, preference being given to residents in parish. "Work very satisfactory."
St. Mary Abbott's, Kensington, Vestry	Stone-breaking. Road-cleansing	—	Registry opened. Work unsatisfactory in quality, and stone-breaking cost 3s. 4½d. per ton more than if done by skilled labour.
Fulham Vestry ...	Laying-out park. Scavenging and clearing away snow	—	£298 spent in wages. First comers were employed, and at end of three days' work each man received ticket entitling him to employment when a vacancy occurred. Men employed clearing snow were given one day's work each, at a cost of £184. Those working at the park were selected, and were employed constantly; men idling were discharged.
Hammersmith Vestry ...	Street cleansing ...	50	Amount expended was £266. Road making by a contractor was also expedited with a view to finding employment for unemployed.
St. George's, Hanover-square, W., Vestry	Road repairing and sewerage work	40	Surveyor is of opinion that the result has been simply to benefit the men employed, at an increased expenditure of £2,000 over the annual estimates for labour and materials.
St. Margaret and St. John Vestry	Road cleansing...	—	Applicants for work had to be recommended by the relieving officers. £140 expended in wages, and £200 voted for establishing and carrying on labour bureau for one year.
St. Martin - in - the - Fields Vestry	Road cleansing...	25	A labour bureau opened, but was a failure, none of the men obtaining employment. £101 expended in work.
St. Marylebone Vestry ...	Road repairing, sewerage, sweeping, and stonebreaking	—	A weekly average of 108 men were employed. Total wages paid, £1,398 4s. 11d. A labour bureau was opened, but in three months found employment for three persons only, at a cost of £38.

Name of local authorities.	Class of work provided.	Daily average number of men employed.	Remarks.
Hampstead Vestry ...	Stonebreaking ... Painting ... Snow sweeping...	12 5 208	Men employed on recommendation of relieving officer; as a rule the men worked well except the snow sweepers, who were idle, incapable of hard work, and not amenable to discipline. Many belonged to the class of "permanent unemployed."
St. Pancras Vestry ...	Road sweeping ...	33	Work was inferior as compared with that done by ordinary labourers.
Hackney Board of Works...	Stonebreaking, painters, carpenters and others	90	Amount paid in wages, £1,043. Carpenters struck first day for trade union rate of pay. Labour bureau opened, very few obtained employment, except those employed by the vestry.
Clerkenwell Vestry ...	Street cleansing ...	—	Registry opened, but only 160 entered.
St. Leonard's, Shoreditch Vestry	Road repairing and stonebreaking	29	Registry opened, and inquiries made as to <i>bona fides</i> of applicants. Total amount paid in wages, £429 16s. 1d. The experiment was deemed eminently successful.
Bethnal-green Vestry ...	Street cleansing and sewerage	12	Registry opened. £2,195 paid in wages on relief works.
Whitechapel Board of Works	Street cleansing ...	25	Employed on recommendation of relieving officer and clergymen.
Mile-end Old-town Vestry	Street sweeping and road repairing	50	Registered and summoned by postcard. In the event of those summoned not applying, outsiders were put on.
Stepney Board of Works...	Street cleansing ...	—	Registry kept.
Poplar Local Board ...	Road cleansing and repairing	78	Registry kept, and as many as possible employed.
Limehouse Board of Works	Road sweeping ...	9	—
St. George's, Southwark Vestry	Road cleansing...	—	—
Rotherhithe Vestry ...	Road making, stone breaking and street cleansing	—	Register was opened and men taken from it in turn as employment was found. £596 expended.
Camberwell Vestry ...	Painting railings, cleaning and painting vestry hall, road sweeping and snow removing	50	The work, being executed in the depth of winter, was considered fair.
Lambeth Vestry ...	Road sweeping...	37	Registry was opened, and the men registered were employed by the surveyor. A large number of the men were of the ordinary "loafing" class.
St. Mary, Newington Vestry	Road cleansing and repairing	50	Registry kept, and employment confined to parishioners, but it was found that residents in adjoining parishes removed into this in order to obtain employment. Result not satisfactory.
Wandsworth Board of Works	Making and repairing roads	10	£851 was expended.
Woolwich Board of Works	Street cleansing and repairing	—	—
Plumstead Board of Works	Road sweeping; few on paving and drainage works	—	A register opened.

Resolutions passed by the Conference.

Resolved—That the report of the Committee be received.

Resolved—That paragraphs 1 to 5 be approved.

Resolved—That paragraphs 6 and 7 be approved, and the several recommendations therein adopted.

On the consideration of paragraph 8, the following amendment was moved by Mr. C. H. Dewey, Wandsworth Borough Council—

“ That this conference of representatives from the administrative authorities of London
 “ assembled to consider the question of unemployed labour, desires to direct the attention of
 “ His Majesty’s Government to the ever increasing number of undesirable aliens landing in
 “ this country, thereby constituting serious difficulty in dealing with the unemployed labour
 “ question, and that it is the sense of this meeting that Parliament should pass a Bill
 “ to restrict the emigration of the undesirable unemployed from other countries.

“ That a copy of this resolution be respectfully submitted to the members of His
 “ Majesty’s Government.”

The amendment, not being seconded, dropped.

It was thereupon,

Resolved—That paragraph 8 be approved and the recommendation adopted.

Resolved—That paragraphs 9, 10 and 11 be approved, and the several recommendations therein adopted.

Resolved—That paragraph 12 be approved.

Resolved—That paragraph 13 be approved and the recommendation therein adopted.

Resolved—That paragraph 14 be approved.

Resolved—That paragraphs 15 and 16 be approved and the several recommendations therein adopted.

Resolved—That paragraphs 17, 18 and 19 be approved.

On the consideration of paragraph 20 the Rev. J. H. Anderson suggested that the word “ period,” in the second line of the recommendation should be altered to “ periods,” and the suggestion having been adopted, it was,

Resolved—That paragraph 20 be approved, and that the County Council be recommended to ask the War Office to consider the practicability of altering the periods of the year during which the militia are embodied for training.

On the consideration of paragraph 21 it was,

Moved by the Rev. J. H. Anderson, seconded by Mr. J. R. MacDonald, and,

Resolved—That the paragraph be approved, and that the County Council be recommended to take steps to secure the registration and periodical inspection of the places of employment of out-workers, and to invite the attention of the Home Secretary to the matter.

Resolved—That paragraphs 22, 23, 24 and 25 be approved, and the several recommendations adopted.

Resolved—That the various appendices to the report be approved.

Moved by Mr. C. H. Dewey, seconded by the Rev. J. H. Anderson, and

Resolved, unanimously—That a hearty vote of thanks be accorded to the Committee for the report which they have presented to the Conference.

Moved by Canon Escreet, seconded by Mr. T. H. Nunn, and

Resolved, unanimously—That a very hearty vote of thanks be accorded to the London County Council for calling the Conference, and to the Chairman of the Council and the late Chairman of the Council for presiding over the deliberations of the Conference.

LACK OF EMPLOYMENT IN LONDON.

REPORT by the GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL,
submitted to, and approved by, the Council at its meeting on 27th October,
1903.

Conference of the London administrative authorities on the subject of the lack of employment.

1.—The Council on 16th December, 1902 (p. 1974), passed the following resolution—

“That the Council do call a conference of all the administrative authorities in London to consider the present lack of employment, and to make representations thereon to the Secretary of State for the Home Department and the President of the Local Government Board; and if necessary, to call a further conference of all public bodies throughout the United Kingdom with a view of approaching His Majesty’s Government and urging upon them the necessity of a national scheme for dealing with the problem.”

In pursuance of this resolution, the London administrative authorities were invited to appoint representatives to attend the conference, and the following delegates were appointed—

City Corporation.

Taylor, George
Tollworthy, James

Metropolitan Asylums Board.

Ecroyd, W. H.
White, J. G.

Metropolitan Borough Councils.

<p>Battersea ... Raynor, A. W., J.P. (Mayor) Rogers, J. W.</p> <p>Bermondsey ... Stevenson, W. Wilkinson, J. H.</p> <p>Bethnal-green... Clark, W. H. Catherall, J. A.</p> <p>Camberwell ... Baily, Rev. W. Falkner Shrimpton, J.</p> <p>Chelsea ... Egerton, H. E., J.P. Griffiths, Evan</p> <p>Deptford ... Hines, Daniel Wood, W.</p> <p>Finsbury ... Chapman, Middleton Penny, John</p> <p>Fulham ... Lee, E. J. Serjeant, W. C.</p> <p>Greenwich ... Lawes, A. Whibley, G. C.</p> <p>Hackney ... Johnson, W., J.P. Whiter, J. W.</p> <p>Hammersmith... Edwards, F. A., F.R.G.S. Rutter, T.</p> <p>Hampstead ... Hall, C. Payne, E. S.</p> <p>Holborn ... Keen, E. H. White, A. M.</p> <p>Islington ... Moffat, C. Wenborn, F. M.</p> <p>Kensington ... Anderson, J. Pennefather, Rev. Canon S. E.</p>	<p>Lambeth ... Bristow, H. Hawkey, J. F.</p> <p>Lewisham ... Luck, M. S. White, T.</p> <p>Paddington ... Evans, C. D. Whyte, J. M.</p> <p>Poplar ... Bellsham, Job. Main, Alex.</p> <p>St. Marylebone Elgood, G. J (Mayor) Wakefield, Rev. H. Russell</p> <p>St. Pancras ... Collins, H. A. Hennessey, D.</p> <p>Shoreditch ... Hazell, A. J. Winkler, H.</p> <p>Southwark ... Bryan, T., M.A., J.P. (Mayor) Chell, E.</p> <p>Stepney ... Barker, W. J. Wherley, E.</p> <p>Stoke Newington Glass, J. Moore, T. H. G.</p> <p>Wandsworth ... Anderson, Rev. J. H., M.A. Dewey, C. H.</p> <p>Westminster ... Everitt, W. Walden, R. Woolley</p> <p>Woolwich ... Grinling, C. H. Turton, I.</p>
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Boards of Guardians.

Bethnal-green ...	Eickhoff, W. Watts-Ditchfield, Rev. J. E.	Lewisham ...	Flood, R. M. Kennard, R.
Camberwell ...	Foster, Alfred (Chairman) Masterman, C. F. G.	Mile - end Old- town	Brien, F. W. Kemp, Robert
Chelsea ...	Brass, J. H. Smith, W. H.	Paddington ...	Empson, C. W. Forster, Rev. J. L., D.D.
City of London	Cross, W. Hann (Chair- man) Evans, Richard	Poplar ...	Chivers, T. C. Lansbury, G.
Fulham ...	Goldie, Col. J. Propert, Rev. P. S. G., M.A. (Chairman)	St. George's, Hanover-square	Tasker, James Wallop, Hon. Gerard
Greenwich ...	Fox-Batley, W. Vercoe-Abbott, J.	St. Marylebone	Anglim, J. Crawford, Mrs. V. M.
Hackney ...	Allardyce, H. L. Saunders, A.	St. Olave's ...	Collins, E. Oakley, W. R.
Hammersmith ...	Howell, John Neighbour, Wm.	St. Pancras ...	Cherese, F. Wetenhall, W. J., J.P.
Hampstead ...	Nunn, Thomas Hancock Viner, Miss Florence A.	Southwark ...	Haynes, Thomas Horsley, Rev. J. W.
Holborn ...	Bolton, T. J. (chairman) Miller, E. (vice-chairman)	Stepney ...	Kain, J. Lewis, George
Islington ...	Farmer, Miss Lizzie Tomkins, Edward	Strand ...	Jaxone, H. L. D'Arcy Lewin, F. E.
Kensington ...	Edgcombe, F. J. S. (Chairman) Keeling, Miss C.	Wandsworth and Clapham	Curtis, Rev. H., M.A. Gray, Mrs. Mary
Lambeth ...	Briant, F. Despard, Mrs. C.	Westminster ...	Wallis, J. P. Wilton, Rev. G. C.
		Whitechapel ...	Brown, James, J.P. Harris, John
		Woolwich ...	Escreet, Rev. Canon. Gregory, Alfred

The General Purposes Committee, together with Mr. Crooks and Mr. MacDonald, who respectively moved and seconded the foregoing resolution of the Council of 16th December, 1902, acted as the representatives of the Council. There were two meetings of the Conference, the first being held on 13th February, 1903, when, after a preliminary discussion, a Committee was appointed to consider and report on the matter. The Committee reported in due course, and on 3rd April, 1903, a second meeting of the Conference was held when the report of the Committee was practically adopted in its entirety. Resolutions on a variety of subjects were passed by the Conference requesting the Council to take action in certain directions, and we have now to place before the Council these resolutions, with a view to such action being taken thereon as the Council may deem expedient.

The various matters dealt with by the Committee of the Conference are fully discussed in their report, and copies of the minutes of the proceedings of the second meeting of the Conference (which contain a copy of the report in question) will be circulated to the members of the Council, with the report of the General Purposes Committee, and it therefore appears to be unnecessary for us to do more than briefly explain the matters dealt with.

The matters referred to may be conveniently grouped under four heads, viz.—

(i) Matters on which it is suggested by the conference that action should be taken by *the Council*.

(ii) Matters on which it is suggested that action should be taken by *other London authorities*.

(iii) Matters on which it is suggested that action should be taken by *the Government*.

(iv) Matters on which it is suggested that action should be taken by *other authorities*.

We therefore propose to deal with the various resolutions passed by the Conference in the foregoing order. Under the first head are included the following matters—

(a) Relief works.

(b) Training of surplus town population in needs and ways of country life. Migration and emigration.

(c) Employment of women.

(d) Employment of children.

(e) Establishment of more complete industrial organisation throughout the country.

(f) Economical difficulties of the poor.

(g) Question of summoning a national conference.

(a) *Relief works.*

The Conference passed the following resolution (Minutes of the Conference, p. 24)—

That the County Council be recommended to prepare, for execution during periods of distress, schemes of public works which may usefully be carried out in the county.

It would appear that from time to time, in periods of exceptional distress, hurried efforts have been made to establish relief works, and the Conference propose that, with a view to avoiding anything like panic legislation, the public authorities might, during more prosperous times, prepare plans for works which might be kept in readiness for execution during periods of depression.

We entirely agree with this opinion, and with the further expression of opinion contained in the report of the Committee of the Conference, that it appears to be sound policy to insist on one

essential feature of relief works, viz., that they should be necessary to the community. We recommend—

(a) That it be referred to the General Purposes Committee to consider and report upon the question of preparing schemes of public works, which may usefully be carried out in the county during periods of distress, and as to the probable cost of such schemes, and their bearing upon the requirements of the county. [Adapted.]

(b) *Training of surplus town population in needs and ways of country life. Migration and emigration.*

On this subject the Conference passed the following resolution (Minutes of the Conference, p. 26)—

That the County Council be asked to forward a copy of this paragraph to the various educational and other authorities in London concerned in the matter.

In the paragraph on this subject the Conference briefly deal with the question of the migration to the country of surplus town population, and also with that of emigration to the colonies. It is suggested that if emigration is a desirable method of relieving industrial depression, steps should be taken for supplying good and reliable information, not only in the shape of definite replies as to emigration requirements but also in the shape of lectures by persons holding responsible positions, on our colonies and dependencies. At the same time it is pointed out in the report of the committee to the conference that if efforts are to be made in the direction of providing training for emigrants to the colonies it is only reasonable that similar efforts should be made on behalf of the home country. We concur in the views expressed, and recommend—

(1) That it be referred to the Technical Education Board to consider and make a special report (1) as to the steps which may usefully be taken for providing practical training in agricultural pursuits for workers at present in London, and (2) as to the desirability of providing lectures on the colonies for the benefit of those of the poorer classes who may wish to know of the advantages and conditions of colonisation. [Adapted.]

(c) *Employment of women.*

The Committee appointed by the Conference have collected a great deal of interesting information on the subject of the employment of women (Minutes of the Conference, pp. 29–31 and 41), but the Conference passed a definite resolution on only one particular section of the question, namely the registration and periodical inspection of the places of employment of out-workers. On this subject the Committee reported as follows—

In connection with the lack of employment amongst women there is one other question which we think should be considered, viz., the present condition of things brought about by the modern extension of the system of home work. In the earlier days this was of course a common practice, and the hand loom was in use in very many families with probably no serious evils arising therefrom. At the present time, however, with the existence of large and densely populated towns and overcrowded dwellings, the conditions are altogether different, and it appears to us that it is very desirable that some steps should be taken for the proper regulation of this class of work, which principally affects women workers. This not only would appear to be advisable from the point of view of the workers themselves, but also in the interests of the consumers of the commodities produced—principally clothing. We would therefore suggest that some steps should be taken for the registration and periodical inspection of all houses in which work of this nature is carried out.

We think that inquiry should be made into the matter to which attention is thus called, and we therefore recommend—

(c) That it be referred to the Public Health Committee to consider and report as to the registration and periodical inspection of the places of employment of outworkers. [Adapted.]

(d) *Employment of children.*

The Committee appointed by the Conference (Minutes of the Conference, p. 31) stated that they were of opinion that one of the many reasons which had in the past helped to swell the ranks of the unemployed was to be found in the fact that in hundreds of cases children had been taken from school when their education was very incomplete, and had been drafted into the lowest ranks of unskilled labour. Such children had no desire to take efficient steps to improve their position, and they had too frequently been content to remain in the ranks of the casual worker. The Committee called attention to the Employment of Children Bill which was introduced into the House of Commons by the Home Secretary, and which was before the House at the time of the Conference, and the Conference passed the following resolution—

That the Conference do record its opinion that legislation with the object of preventing the employment of children below the age of twelve years is eminently desirable, and that the County Council be asked to forward the finding of the Conference on this subject to the Home Secretary.

The bill referred to became law under the title of The Employment of Children Act, 1903. This Act empowers the Council, as the local authority under the Act, to make by-laws for regulating the employment of children, and for regulating street-trading by persons under 16, and to license such street-traders. We think that the observations in the report made by the Conference on this subject are very valuable, and with regard to the resolution passed on the subject of the employment of children, we think that the matter should be referred to the Public Control Committee, to whom the Council on 13th October, 1903, referred for consideration and report all questions relating to the Employment of Children Act, 1903.

We therefore recommend—

(d) That the resolution passed by the Conference on the subject of the employment of children be referred to the Public Control Committee. [Adapted.]

(e) *Establishment of a more complete industrial organisation throughout the country.*

It would appear from their report to the Conference (Minutes of the Conference, pp. 17, 32-33), that the committee experienced considerable difficulty in arriving at any satisfactory and complete figures with reference to the extent of distress prevailing amongst the unemployed. They state that the Labour Department of the Board of Trade at the present time collects much valuable information with reference to the industrial conditions of the country, which is summarised in the official monthly publication, *The Labour Gazette*; but the opinion is expressed that much remains to be done in the direction of the dissemination of this and other information of the utmost importance to the workers. The Committee therefore suggest that in each area there should be an industrial office which should act as an agency for the collection of authentic information on the existing industrial conditions of the district. That industrial office would be organised by the town or borough council, and would report to a central office, which it is suggested should be established for each group of towns or boroughs; that is to say, in London, the County Council, and in other centres of industry a joint committee consisting of representatives from the various towns interested. This central office would in turn report to the Labour department of the Board of Trade, who would thus be supplied with authentic information for the whole kingdom. It is also suggested that to the central office might be sent reports from colonial and foreign towns. The Committee proceed to suggest that the local offices might be under the management of a committee of the county or borough council, on which representatives of employers, works, and other persons interested, might serve under a scheme to be drawn up by the county or borough council. The various societies of the organised trades would forward monthly statements and reports of the local offices, and statistics with regard to unorganised trades and unskilled labour would be provided by means of the labour bureaux. The idea of the committee is summarised in the following paragraph which we quote from their report—

Such an organisation would, by the proposed reference to a common or superior office, enable reliable information to be obtained as to any exceptional conditions arising in the industrial world, and would enable the various localities to make representations to the central office, which would be responsible for the industrial interests of the nation as a whole. It is thought that if the whole of the industrial conditions of the kingdom could by such a system as that above indicated be brought under the survey of local offices, and ultimately of the central office, earlier warnings of the progress of events could be brought before the workers concerned than is possible without any such organisation.

On this subject the following paragraphs from the report of the committee may also usefully be set out—

The interests of the community are so wrapped up in the efficiency of the working classes, that it can only be reasonable that the respective authorities representing it, to whom is already entrusted the corporate interests of the people in the direction of education, public health, etc., and who are called upon to pay for the support of the wreckage resulting from the existing social system, should endeavour to take steps for rendering such assistance to the workers as will prevent a condition of things under which the present wreckage results. By assistance is *not* meant a system of charitable doles, but rather the dissemination of such information as will enable the working classes to realise what steps they should themselves take to improve their position, the provision of training classes and lectures on social problems as well as other technical education, and the enabling of a comprehensive view of the industrial conditions of the whole country to be taken by the central authority, so that really efficient steps may be taken to remove any evil which may be shown to exist. Again, by assistance is *not* meant the provision of useless works, but rather the institution of such methods as will in the long run prevent the necessity for such works being undertaken.

It is only at times like the present that the subject of the unemployed is generally considered, and then the aid of the local authorities is invoked to meet sudden emergencies. Aid thus demanded and thus given is apt to be not useful, but even pernicious, in the long run, for the subject is one which needs much consideration. It is one of the most serious of public economics, and the effect of any action taken must be far reaching. What, therefore, is needed, is a law which shall constitute the question of the unemployed one of the matters which local authorities must consider, and under proper restrictions and conditions may take steps to put their conclusions into practice. By this means a continuous and admitted policy would be possible, and there would be no danger of the country or localities suffering from "panic administration." For these and other reasons we would emphasize the desirability of steps being taken in the direction suggested.

The exact resolution passed by the Conference on the subject was as follows—

That the County Council be recommended to consider the question of the establishment of a more complete industrial organisation as suggested, and that for that purpose it be requested to consider—

(i.) As to whether any additional statutory powers are necessary to enable such an organisation to be established in London, and, if any further powers are needed, the best means of obtaining them.

(ii.) As to the desirability of the Government being asked to take steps for the establishment of such an organisation throughout the country.

We are of opinion that valuable suggestions have been made in the matter of the industrial organisation of the country, and we therefore recommend—

(e) That it be an instruction to the General Purposes Committee to consider, and, if necessary, to communicate with the Prime Minister (i.) on the question of constituting the conditions of unemployed workers a subject of local administration and (ii.) as to the establishment of an industrial organisation throughout the country on the lines of the suggestion made in the report of the committee appointed by the Conference. [Adapted.]

(f) *Economical difficulties of the poor.*

The committee of the Conference stated that during the consideration of the problem they had been confronted with some of the economical difficulties with which the poor have always to contend, and the Conference passed the following resolution (Minutes of the Conference, p. 93)—

That the County Council be recommended to appoint a special committee to inquire into the economical difficulties of the poor.

We concur in the proposal and recommend—

(f) That it be referred to the General Purposes Committee to consider and report as to the advisability of appointing a special committee to inquire into and report upon the economical difficulties of the poor. [Adapted.]

(g) *National conference.*

The question of summoning a national conference was referred to in the resolution of the Council of December last, but on this subject the Conference passed the following resolution (Minutes of the Conference, p. 27)—

That in the opinion of the Conference it is inexpedient at the present time to call a national conference on the subject of the unemployed, but that the County Council be requested to forward copies of the report of the Conference to the county, municipal and poor law authorities throughout the country and to invite their observations thereon.

We concur in the views expressed in this resolution, and recommend—

(g) That copies of the report of the Conference be forwarded to the county, municipal and poor law authorities throughout the country, and that the observations of those authorities be invited thereon. [Adapted.]

The matters on which it is suggested that action should be taken by other London authorities arrange themselves under the following heads—

(h) Relief works.

(i) Period of execution of public works.

(j) Expediting public works.

(k) Question of conferring power upon boards of guardians to take land for the purpose of providing work in times of want. Co-operation between borough councils and guardians in times of exceptional distress.

(h) *Relief works.*

We have already referred to the question of the execution of relief works by the Council, but the Conference further suggest (Minutes of the Conference, p. 24) that similar action should be taken by borough councils, the Conference having passed the following resolution—

That the County Council be recommended to invite the borough councils to prepare schemes of public works of a local character which may usefully be carried out during periods of distress.

We concur in this suggestion, and recommend—

(h) That the General Purposes Committee be authorised to communicate with the metropolitan borough councils on the lines of the resolution of the Conference as to the preparation of schemes of public works of a local character. [Adapted.]

(i) *Period of execution of public works.*

In the paragraph on the subject of relief works, the committee suggest (Minutes of the Conference, p. 24) that public authorities already have within their power opportunities of doing a great deal of good in the direction of meeting temporary depressions of trade, inasmuch as much of the work carried out by those authorities could, it is thought, be done just as efficiently and cheaply in the slack as in the busy seasons. It is therefore suggested that public authorities should make a practice of not executing during such seasons any work which could equally well be done during the winter or slack periods. By this means it is hoped that the slack times of private enterprise would coincide with the period of great activity of public works, and that this would tend to maintain the level of employment throughout the whole year. As pointed out by the committee of the Conference, it has for the last few years been the rule of the Council to postpone whatever work could be postponed to the winter season for the purpose suggested above.

The resolution passed by the Conference on this subject was as follows—

That the County Council be recommended to address communications to the various public authorities in London suggesting the desirability of public work being carried out as far as possible during the slack season.

We concur in this resolution, and recommend—

(i) That it be suggested to the various public authorities in London that, as far as practicable, public work be carried out during the "slack" seasons. [Adapted.]

(j) *Expediting public works.*

The committee of the Conference stated (Minutes of the Conference, p. 26) that they had had before them the following resolution suggested by the Poplar Board of Guardians—

That in view of the exceptional slackness of demand for labour, public authorities are urged to push on with all expedition work for which provision has already been made, more particularly work like the building of houses, which will employ different classes of skilled

labour, and that they be recommended to do this with as little publicity as possible, so as not to attract numbers of the unemployed from the country; and, further, that they be recommended to limit employment of these works to local men so far as is possible.

The committee state that probably action in the direction suggested has already been taken by the various authorities concerned, but the Conference on their recommendation decided to ask the Council to invite the attention of the local authorities to the paragraph on the subject. We therefore recommend—

(j) That the attention of the various public authorities be invited to the paragraph in the report of the committee to the Conference on the subject of expediting public works. [Adapted.]

(k) *Question of conferring power upon boards of guardians to take land for the purpose of providing work in times of want. Co-operation between borough councils and guardians in times of exceptional distress.*

The Conference decided (Minutes of the Conference, pp. 26-27) that the Council should be asked to ascertain the views of the borough councils and the boards of guardians on certain suggestions with reference to the taking of land by the guardians for the purpose of finding work for the unemployed in times of want, and that borough councils should co-operate with the guardians during such periods.

We think the views of the authorities referred to should be ascertained, and we therefore recommend—

(k) That the metropolitan borough councils and boards of guardians be invited to express their views on the suggestions (i.) that power should be conferred upon boards of guardians, either individually or conjointly, to take land for the purpose of finding work for the unemployed in times of want, and (ii.) that during periods of exceptional distress the borough councils should co-operate with the boards of guardians in order that the pauperisation of those persons whose difficulties are occasioned only by exceptional circumstances arising from temporary scarcity of employment may as far as practicable be avoided. [Adapted.]

The Conference suggested that action should be taken by the Government with regard to the following—

- (l) Relief works.
- (m) Official labour returns.
- (n) Disfranchisement following poor law relief.
- (o) Minister of Industry.
- (p) Militia training.

(l) *Relief works.*

The Conference suggested (Minutes of the Conference, p. 24) that the Government should be asked to consider the question of the preparation of schemes of relief works of a national character, and we recommend—

(l) That a communication be addressed to the Prime Minister suggesting that consideration should be given to the question of the preparation of schemes of works of a national character which may usefully be carried out during periods of distress. [Adapted.]

(m) *Official labour returns.*

Attention is called in the report of the Committee to the conference (Minutes of the Conference, p. 25) to the question of inviting the attention of local authorities throughout the country to the overcrowded state of the London labour market, and the committee suggest that greater publicity should be given to the official returns which appear each month in the *Labour Gazette*. We think it would be a great advantage if any steps could be taken in this direction and therefore recommend—

(m) That a communication be addressed to the Board of Trade suggesting that steps should be taken for making the official labour returns more generally known throughout the country. [Adapted.]

(n) *Disfranchisement following poor law relief.*

On this subject the Conference passed the following resolution (Minutes of the Conference, p. 27)—

That the Conference do endorse the recommendation of the Select Committee on Distress from Want of Employment that a person should not be disfranchised unless he has received relief for a period exceeding one month during the qualifying year, and has also received relief at some period during the year immediately preceding the qualifying year; and that the County Council be asked to convey to the Local Government Board an expression of the opinion of the Conference on the matter.

We think the decision of the Conference should be conveyed to the Local Government Board as desired, and we therefore recommend—

(n) That the Local Government Board be informed of the resolution passed by the Conference on the subject of disfranchisement following the receipt of poor law relief. [Adapted.]

(o) *Minister of Industry.*

The Poplar Borough Council and Board of Guardians suggested the desirability of considering as to whether the Government should be approached on the subject of appointing a Minister of Industry. The committee in their report to the Conference (Minutes of the Conference, p. 28) call attention to the fact that this matter has already been brought before Parliament and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has promised that an inquiry should be instituted into the position of and the distribution of work among the Board of Trade and other Government departments. The Conference passed the following resolution—

That in connection with the promised inquiry into the duties of the Board of Trade and other Government departments, the County Council be requested to forward a copy of the report of the Conference to His Majesty's Government.

We concur in the suggestion, and therefore recommend—

(o) That in forwarding copies of the report of the Conference to the Prime Minister, attention be invited to the various matters included therein which bear on the question of the promised inquiry into the duties of the Board of Trade and other Government departments. [Adapted.]

(p) *Militia training.*

The Committee of the Conference call attention (Minutes of the Conference, p. 29) to the fact that the period of militia training nearly always takes place during the busier months of the year, and it is suggested that if it should prove practicable to alter the period of training to the slack months, say, from November to April, it appears probable that benefit would result to all authorities concerned. The Conference passed the following resolution—

That the County Council be recommended to ask the War Office to consider the practicability of altering the periods of the year during which the Militia are embodied for training.

We think that the attention of the War Office might properly be invited to the question, and therefore recommend—

(p) That the War Office be asked to consider the practicability of altering the periods of the year during which the militia are embodied for training. [Adapted.]

In addition to the matters already referred to in our report, the Conference suggest that action should be taken by authorities, other than those already mentioned, in the following matters—

The period of execution of public works.

Alien immigration.

Discharged soldiers.

(q) *Period of execution of public works.*

We have already referred to this question, but in addition to the resolution before referred to, the Conference passed the following resolution (Minutes of the Conference, p. 24)—

That the County Council be recommended to consider the expediency of taking steps with a view to the various public authorities throughout the country being invited to carry out public works as far as possible during the "slack" season.

We concur in the views expressed by the committee of the Conference that any such system with regard to the execution of public works should be adopted universally and in a systematic manner, so that the present large and periodic influx of labour from the country might be avoided and the responsibility thrown upon each locality for dealing with its own problem. We therefore recommend—

(q) That the attention of the various municipal authorities throughout the country be invited to the question of the desirability of public works being executed during the slack season. [Adapted.]

Alien immigration.

The committee of the Conference include in their report a short paragraph (Minutes of the Conference, p. 25) on the subject of alien immigration in which they make the following statement—

"While it does not therefore appear to be expedient to express any definite opinions on this subject pending the report of the Royal Commission, it may be safely asserted that if aliens are allowed to immigrate into London they should be compelled to observe all those sanitary laws which are insisted upon in the case of Londoners generally. In other words, immigration into London should not, as it is at present, be made more easy, and London therefore made attractive for undesirable aliens by any relaxation in the administration of the sanitary laws and regulations."

The Conference passed the following resolution on the subject—

That the County Council be recommended to forward a copy of the report of the Conference to the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, and to invite the attention of the Commission to the paragraph on the subject of alien immigration.

As the report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration has now been issued, we think that no action is necessary at the present time upon this resolution of the Conference.

Discharged soldiers.

In connection with the question already referred to with regard to the desirability of calling attention to the existing state of the London labour market, the Conference passed the following resolution (Minutes of the Conference, p. 25)—

That the County Council be recommended to call the attention of the various societies and others interested in the employment of discharged soldiers to the existing state of the London labour market.

We are not prepared to make any recommendation to the Council upon this resolution of the Conference.

(r) *Circulation of the report of the Conference.*

In conclusion the Conference passed the following resolutions (Minutes of the Conference, p. 34)—

That the County Council be recommended to forward copies of the report of the conference to—

- (i.) His Majesty's Government.
- (ii.) The administrative authorities in London.
- (iii.) The public libraries in London.
- (iv.) The associations of employers and workmen in London.
- (v.) The press.

That the County Council be recommended to invite the other administrative authorities in London to make observations on the report, and on the receipt of such observations to consider as to what steps should be taken thereon.

That the County Council be recommended to publish and place on sale the report of the Conference.

We think that the most convenient way to circulate a report of the Conference would be for the clerk of the Council to prepare a report embodying a record of the proceedings of the Conference and also the action of the Council taken thereon. We therefore recommend—

(*r*) (i.) That the clerk of the Council do prepare a report embodying a record of the proceedings of the Conference on the subject of the lack of employment and of the action taken by the Council thereon. [Adopted.]

(ii.) That copies of such report be forwarded to—

(a) The various Government departments

(b) The administrative authorities in London.

(c) The public libraries in London.

(d) The associations of employers and workmen in London.

(e) The press. [Adopted.]

(iii.) That the administrative authorities in London and the associations of workmen and employers be invited to make observations on the report before mentioned, that such observations when received do stand referred to the General Purposes Committee with an instruction to report to the Council thereon. [Adopted.]

(iv.) That the report to be prepared by the clerk of the Council in accordance with resolution (*r*) (i.) be published and placed on sale. [Adopted.]

E. A. CORNWALL,
(Chairman.

Motion made—That the report be received.

After debate,

Motion put, and declared to be carried.

Resolved—That the report be received.

(*a* to *q*.) **Resolved**—That the several recommendations of the Committee, (*a*) to (*q*) inclusive, be adopted.

(*r*.) Motion made—That the recommendation of the Committee, (*r*), be adopted.

After debate,

Motion put, and declared to be carried.

Resolved accordingly.



